The ARYAN PATH

Vol. III. NOVEMBER 1932 No. 11.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
SICK AT HEART	723
THE CURSE OF RELIGIONS—*By Joseph Gaer*	726
KARMA AS A THEORY OF RETRIBUTION—*By Jagadisan M. Kumarappa*	729
THE THRILL PSYCHOSIS—*By Charles Dernier*	735
THE RELIGION OF WILLIAM BLAKE—*By John Middleton Murry*	738
ALCHEMY IN CHINA—*By Eric J. Holmyard*	745
THE PROBLEM OF EVIL—*By J. K. Majumdar*	751
SIMEON BEN YOHAI—*By Geoffrey West*	755
THE EXPERIMENTAL ORIGIN OF KNOWLEDGE II—*By W. Wilson Leisenring*	760
MYSTICISM OF THE DRUSES—*By Syed A. Rafique*	764
PHILOSOPHY AND MYSTICISM—*By J. D. Beresford*	766
MUSLIM ESOTERICISM—*By Hugh I'A. Fausset*	770
NEW BOOKS AND OLD—*By R. Naga Raja Sarma, K. S. Shelvankar, R. A. L. Armstrong and others*	775
CORRESPONDENCE—*By Philip Chapin Jones, Tom Leon, Saroj Kumar Das and others*	787
ENDS & SAYINGS	790

THEOSOPHY CO. (INDIA), LTD.,
51, Esplanade Road, - - BOMBAY, INDIA.

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THE ARYAN PATH

ADDRESS:

51, Esplanade Road, Bombay, India.

PUBLISHERS:—Theosophy Co. (India), Ltd.

SUBSCRIPTIONS:—No subscriptions are accepted for less than six months, but subscriptions may begin with any desired number. All subscriptions, orders for single and back numbers, and back volumes, bound or unbound, should be accompanied by the necessary remittance to the Manager, THE ARYAN PATH. Price: In India, single copy Re. 1; per annum Rs. 10. In Europe, single copy 2s. 6d.; per annum £ 1 or equivalent. In America single copy 50 cents: per annum $ 5; post free.

CONTRIBUTIONS:—Contributions submitted for publication should be typewritten, on one side of the paper only, with wide margin, and copies should be in all cases retained by the writers, as no manuscripts are returned. The Editors hold themselves responsible for unsigned articles only. They are not necessarily in agreement with the views of their contributors to whom they leave free expression of opinion.

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(*a*) To form a nucleus of universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour;

(*b*) The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and a demonstration of the importance of such study; and

(*c*) The investigation of the unexplained laws of nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

AUM

Unveil, O Thou who givest sustenance to the world, that face of the true Sun, which is now hidden by a vase of golden light! so that we may see the truth and know our whole duty.

THE ARYAN PATH

VOL. III NOVEMBER 1932 No. 11

SICK AT HEART

The world is sick. Everybody talks about it. Everybody also talks about the achievements of Science, and about knowledge of which there is no dearth, and yet the world is sick. Of food there is plenty and yet hungry people walk the streets. Factories turn out clothes and shoes and boots, and yet men and women and children are in rags. This sickness is traced to the great War, and while in one part of the world disarmament is talked about, in another arms are being sharpened for ready use; the impotent League of Nations goes on cerebrating.

The intellect of humanity is not sick; however great the quantity of false knowledge, there is sufficient appreciation of what is true: who does not know that sacrifice, co-operation, brotherliness are the remedies? Why are they not applied? There is a gulf between apperception of a fact and its effective use. The will to do must be developed. Our humanity suffers from a weak will, and is not able to do that which it perceives as right. It is sick at heart.

What are some of the symptoms of this ailment?

The economic crisis reveals how widespread is the false value assigned to the purchasing power of money and metal.

For example: Those who have lost some of their millions consider themselves wiped out—yet they have enough to indulge in things which are downright luxuries to others. Or this: In America impoverished masses are a new phenomenon and every body is talking about it; in India it is no phenomenon but a normal condition of existence for decades

and there is none so rich as to offer it remedy. The impoverished masses of America may be called the well-to-do compared to the Indian ryot.

Values ought to be assigned to things in terms of necessity. But Maya veils our vision. There is really no lack of clothes and food. The world is not suffering from poverty but from extravagance. All people have a strongly developed sense of possession and even those who are able to satisfy it, are full of discontent. Confusion about luxuries and necessities confounds us more and more.

How has this arisen? Through false ideas about *social* status. Competition on the plane of economics is a reflection of the more subtle competition in the social sets. To keep up appearances implies extravagance as well as exploitation of human feelings and emotions. In society, one set exploits another; there is competition on the field of mere appearances, and the race is so wildly and persistently run that men and women in society lose sight of moral values. For example, small talk, shop talk and gossip, (and, not only rarely, gossip which is cruel) are almost necessities of the smart set, and even in the "religious and conservative India" some have begun aping this abomination of the west. Rich people who run down political bolshevism are so often themselves social anarchists, who "will do as they please," and are regardless of decorum and decencies of a real *social* life, one in which our neighbours may not be loved as our brethren, but in which at least they would be regarded as having some claim on our consideration.

This heart-disease is caused by selfishness—selfishness in high places being copied by others. Selfishness is the prolific mother of human vices, lie being born out of the necessity for dissembling, and hypocrisy out of the desire to mask lie. We live and move and have our being in the omnipresent force called respectability whose trinitarian aspects are sham, humbug, falsehood.

There is so much of charity—with what is left over! There is so much kindness, appreciation, and helpfulness for the poor—when we are not busy with the rich! There is so much of social service rendered—because it feels good! People fool themselves and ease their conscience and think that they are unselfish and considerate when they are only indulging in ill-conceived gifts which often go to the undeserved and more often strengthen pauperism and slave-mentality.

Turn from the smart society to certain so-called literary and artistic sets. There is hypocritical verbiage about soul and spirit and self-expression; among them are numerous leaders and teachers to whom the old Upanishadic definition applies—

अन्धेनैव नीयमाना यथान्धाः ॥

Blind leading the blind.

There is another Maya which

envelops large masses: "This is an economic disease and a proper adjustment between capital and labour, between production and distribution, will heal all our ills," say they. What are the *moral* roots of the tree of capital? What are the real causes which produce a poverty-stricken society? Lack of moral perception and of moral stamina.

Masseurs are handling its economic limbs, and educators are injecting information in its head, but the sick heart of humanity is left unnursed. What is the remedy? Neither political legislation nor social-service will avail. The politician who preaches prohibition but drinks, the social servant who bestows charity but is ignorant of what sacrifice means, educator who "can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow" his own injunctions—these cannot inspire humanity to awaken to verities and realities.

Individuals who are self-induced to better themselves, who seek knowledge and a discipline of life, who will try not to save other peoples' bodies and minds, but their own souls, will become the real saviours of this civilization. When a few at least will give up the habit of following leaders, when a few at least demand that preachment and practice *shall* go together and set out to supply that demand in their own selves and in their own lives, they will start reform along the *only* right line—from within without. Some souls must become the centres of life which inspire and energize their families and friends, not by precept only but by example also.

Control of self and discipline in life will beget a luminous mind, an enlightened sense of charity and an impersonal service. It is the leaven of such a few earnest hearts which will raise the status of the whole of humanity. The very existence of such individuals in a single community will beget a Social Order which honours the rights of man through a proper discharge by men of their duties. Such a Social Order among a single community or country, would expand and encircle other races and lands. Such a Social Order implies that each kingdom and nation has a message to give to the world for the edification of sister kingdoms and nations, and in giving that message each earns for itself the privilege of learning from others.

The work must begin with the individuals. Discipline in life has suffered a reverse these many years, and those who practise discipline will become and will be recognized as the true leaders. Their wealth of wisdom, simplicity of life, and uncorruptibility of nature will act as transmitters of that which is the true, the good, and the beautiful in one.

THE CURSE OF RELIGIONS

[**Joseph Gaer's** novel *Legend called Meryom* was published in 1928. He is also the author of two folk-lore volumes, *The Magic Flight* and *The Burning Bush.* In 1929 he wrote a popular study of *How the Great Religions Began.* This article is Theosophical in its condemnation of religions and in its appeal for Universal Brotherhood founded on the Gospel of Knowledge.—EDS.]

There are undoubtedly as many ways of classifying ignorance as there are for the classification of knowledge. But all classes of ignorance are divisible into two groups: (*a*) Lack of knowledge due to the inability of obtaining or receiving data; and (*b*) Lack of knowledge due to the deliberate exclusion of obtainable data.

To the former belongs our entire nescience of the greater part of the mysterious realities that surround us, though their existence is sometimes demonstrated to us deductively, and through channels more intuitive than sensorial.

The mind, ever eager to solve mysteries and to discover the unknowable, chafes under its own limitations. And often, in its attempt to attain the unattainable, indulges in delusive speculation that, having no basis in fact, has no basis in truth.

Much harm has resulted when such speculation was resolved into a presumably logical system and presented to the credulous as a science.

But it is in the realm of the second group of ignorance (ignorance deliberately imposed where knowledge is obtainable) that man is the greatest offender. And in no department of human activity has this offence been so persistently lamentable as in the mosque, church and synagogue where, within the shadow of the gods, ignorance was and is utilized as a power to breed misunderstanding and to cultivate hatred.

Neither the differences of language nor the differences of race and colour were ever responsible for as much enmity among the nations as the artificial barriers set up by religious propagandists who, having asserted that theirs was " the only true revealed religion," proceeded to brand all other faiths as the teachings of Satan and their followers as the children of the Devil.

China is often singled out with ridicule and scorn for Emperor T'sin's patriotic attempt to isolate his Empire from the rest of the world by building a wall around it. How much more subject to scorn are the religions East and West which set up spiritual walls around their faiths and pronounce all those without their walls as doomed to eternal damnation ?

This deliberate isolation of a religious experience from all other religious experiences of mankind, crowning it with exclusive claims to divine revelation, is not only contrary to the will and concepts of the great spiritual teachers

throughout history, but it is also in complete contradiction to the very essence of true religion, which may be defined as the craving in the human soul for a universal unity.

This craving for a Universal Unity or a Brotherhood of Man has found utterance not only in religion but also in the highest expression of art, literature and ethics. Poets of every age interpreted it in some form or another.

Yet so thorough is the deliberate exclusiveness of most fanatical ecclesiasticism that the duty to spread the gospel which would bind each follower "to fear himself, and love all human kind" is forgotten, and the study of religions other than one's own is forbidden and denounced as soul-destroying.

The attempt is rather to keep the followers of one religion from any knowledge of the teachings of other religions and each one to claim for his own unparalleled loftiness of aspiration, unique in the history of religion.

The gospel of Love is certainly a gospel that evokes reverence and admiration. Yet I am certain that it would come as an unpleasant shock rather than as a pleasant revelation to most believers in the West to learn that the Chinese sage, Confucius, frequently expounded this gospel of Love.

Said Confucius:—

"*To love mankind, that is love.*"

"*To hold dear the effort more than the prize may be called love.*"

"*Love makes all things look beautiful. Lover offers peace. When love is at stake, my children, yield not to an army.*"

"*A heart set on love can do no wrong.*"

How strange it sometimes seems that people are unable to grasp the fact that just as the very notion and concept of God involves, necessarily, the concept of a universal unity, even so does the concept of a universal unity hold the gospel of Love, and it must therefore be innate in the teachings of *every* religion.

What is true of the gospel of Love is also true of the gospel of Salvation and the gospel of the Good Deed.

"From Good must come Good and from Evil must come Evil," said the Buddha.

No matter in what other words this truth is uttered, it remains the same in essence.

One can go through the teachings of *any* of the great religions and find their counterparts in most of the other great religions, differing only in form, differing only in non-essentials.

Ordinarily one would expect a glowing appreciation on the part of theologians at the realization that love of mankind and the search for the true and the good is universal and has always found utterance from the lips of profound teachers. But it seems the weakness of most established churches to find it necessary to glorify their particular creeds with the claim of exclusive revelation, and to protect their claim

by surrounding themselves with walls shutting out the teachings of others.

The results of these claims to exclusive godliness are only too well known. Almost every page in human history contains a record of bloodshed perpetrated in the name of the Gospel of Exclusive Truth of one dominant religious group or another.

It is not my purpose to record here the effects of religious persecution in the past. It is rather my intention to state the need for the dissemination of the general knowledge of all religions in the historical manner.

The late Lord Haldane, in an article in *The Hibbert Journal* for July, 1928, wrote:

> The purpose of what I have written . . . is to draw attention to the fact that under wholly divergent forms the great religions of the East and of the West have more of a common substratum than we here suppose . . . East is not so dissevered from West as we are apt to assume in our practice.

But our practice to assume that the East is so thoroughly diverse from the West in its attitude toward life and its religious ideals and practices arises only through our ignorance of the philosophy and the religions of the East—an ignorance, as I have already pointed out, in which we have deliberately cloaked ourselves, or, to be more exact, an ignorance in which our clergy have deliberately cloaked us just, perhaps, as the East has cloaked itself in ignorance of the ideals and the spiritual values of the West.

Religion, in the widest sense of the word, is our birthright. Just as boys and girls of our day are given some freedom to choose their life vocations, they ought to be equally free to follow their inclinations in matters of religious experience—the experience that pervades all other experiences of life.

It is, of course, the duty of parents and teachers to guide the young and cultivate their discriminating faculties in all subjects, outside of religion. But it is equally their duty to present to their youth all obtainable knowledge within their grasp on *all* religions.

If humanity is to reach that ideal goal toward which it is presumably moving, it must first learn to use knowledge as its means of certain advance. And education ought to begin with the young.

The circumscribed and narrow creed within a creed, nurtured on ignorance and hatred, must go. The religion of the future, as the entire society of the future, will have to relinquish competitive and selfish ideals for co-operative ideals that will benefit the entire group within which the individual functions.

Before human society can reach its lofty goal, it will have to accept the Gospel of Knowledge. For the Road of Knowledge alone leads to Universal Brotherhood.

JOSEPH GAER

KARMA AS A THEORY OF RETRIBUTION

[In our March number **Dr. Jagadisan M. Kumarappa** wrote about Karma as a philosophical theory of causation; in the following article he makes some psychological applications. Those of our readers who desire to pursue the study of this practical aspect of the Law of Ethical Causation are recommended to study the U. L. T. Pamphlet, No. 6, which contains an exposition of the Law, and also two other articles on "The Moral Law of Compensation" and "Is Poverty Bad Karma?" and No. 21 which contains "Aphorisms on Karma" useful for practical application.—EDS.]

"He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit of the spirit shall reap life everlasting." In other words, we reap what we sow. Such, in brief, is the Law of Karma in the field of human action. Since whatever happens is the effect of an anterior cause, there is nothing uncertain or capricious in the moral world any more than there is in the physical. Naturally therefore our happiness or misery is the fruit of what we ourselves have done in the past rather than the award of a power residing outside of us. In obedience to this law of ethical causation, a man's good actions propagate goodness and bad actions, evil, in the agent himself first, and then through him in others, thus disturbing the balanced harmony of the Universe. But then, how do the actions of Yesterday affect the life of To-day? That is precisely the way the causal law operates in order to restore the disturbed equilibrium in the physical world and the broken harmony in the moral world. Resting on blind justice, the Law of Karma, like the Supreme Deity it represents, allows each cause, small or great, to work out its inevitable effects, and gives back to every man the actual consequences of his actions without mercy or wrath.

In view of the fact that the moral world rests on the postulate of absolute justice and equity, Madame Blavatsky speaks of this aspect of Karma as the Law of Retribution. If it is true that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap, it must be equally true, says the advocate of Karma, that whatsoever a man reaps that he must have also sown. His personal traits, his woe and weal, his sex and status in life,—in short, all the circumstances of his lot are explicable, he maintains, only on the basis of this law of retribution. But cause and effect can be thus linked in the moral world only if there is an infinite succession of lives. For only then can the effects be brought to fruition in some future existence, if by chance they are not matured in the course of the present life. Hence we find the doctrine of Karma inextricably interwoven with that of Re-incarnation.

Actions of the past life, awaiting development as effects, force forward each entity to a fresh in-

carnation. Buddhism teaches that the action of an individual is his possession and inheritance; further, it maintains that his action is not only the womb that bears him but also the race of which he is akin. To state the same idea differently, actions form the soul structure which manifests itself as the formative element that shapes our existence and destiny. Action has many planes, such as the physical, the instinctual, the intellectual, the moral, the spiritual and the like, in which it can inhere and operate. Physical karma will manifest itself in physical tendencies, bringing sensual enjoyments and bodily sufferings. The intellectual and moral planes are likewise the result of past Karmic tendencies. It is thus made possible for the newly incarnated entity, with its moral, intellectual and other equipments, to be in unbroken continuity with its past. After incarnation only that amount of Karmic energy which the entity has at birth manifests itself as the initial Karma. Fresh Karma begins after that period, and the new personality becomes the ruler of his destiny. Out of the present life, Karma causes in this manner new life to flow forth continually in an inexhaustible stream.

The ego's incarnation in physical life being the first great result of Karmic action, the birth-seeking entity, consisting of desires and dispositions, aptitudes and tendencies gained through the struggles of previous existence, presses forward manifestation in bodily form. But since the Ego or the Individuality has no spiritual origin in the parentage in which it seeks its embodiment, it is the dominant affinities which select, when the time is mature for its incarnation, the home that is most congenial for the development of this group of formative faculties. In other words, the incarnation of the Ego takes place in such surroundings as are most in harmony with its Karmic tendencies. Thus it happens that the entity's station in life, its sex, the nature of its physique,—in short, all those conditioning factors of physical existence classified under the terms "heredity" and "national traits" are determined by the effects of actions contained in the Karma. Hence we may even say that it is the child that chooses (of course automatically and unconsciously to himself) not only its parents but also its race and the country of its birth. Thus Karma fulfils itself in the life history of each individual agent, and out of the actions of this life creates, as due reaction, the life that follows, determining not only the occurrence but also the character of the rebirth.

Karma is always changing, and consequently the abode of the Spirit must also keep changing. The Ego therefore is dragged back into earthly life again and again, thus making its long continuance in one existence well-nigh impossible. So long as action is governed by material and selfish motives, just so long must the effect of that action be manifested

in rebirths. All action, no matter on what plane, produces disturbance in the balanced harmony of the universe, and the vibrations so caused roll backwards and forwards until equilibrium is restored. But the restoration of the balance depends on the reconverging of all the forces to the same point whence they started. So it happens that the consequences of a man's deeds re-act upon him with the same force with which he set them in motion. Hence in the moral world, the law of conservation of energy becomes the deed with reward and punishment and the law of rebirth the basis of the most elaborate scheme of moral retribution ever offered to the world. But retribution, as here understood, is not a pure vindictive theory of punishment. Reward and punishment are there for the progressive education of the will. So the law of retribution, not being an end in itself, has its reformative and preventive aspects also.

In the domain of eternal justice sin and its punishment are inseparably connected as the same event because there is no real distinction between the action and its outcome. Reward must follow a good deed and punishment an evil one. One man enjoys wealth and happiness, while another experiences poverty and sorrow. Why is this? Because that is the way the universal law of retributive justice operates; each state is the exact award due for the acts which disturbed or preserved the harmony of nature. Therefore in quality as well as in quantity, life is the accurately meted and altogether fitting expiation of the deeds of a previous existence. But then, is it just to punish an individual for the sins committed in a former birth of which he has no recollection? If there is no memory of past existence, of what value is this scheme of recompense? In reply it may be pointed out that it is far more unjust that a man should bear the penalty of sins committed by his progenitors, sins for which he is in no way responsible, and of which he has no knowledge, than that he should suffer for his own transgressions, even though his memory carries no record of them. As for the value of retribution, it must be noted that since what a man takes over into his next life is not details of memory but character, not knowledge but strength of mind, memory of past experiences is not indispensable. So long as the qualities of the spirit are cultivated, preserved and transmitted from one life to another by the law of moral retribution it must be regarded as both essential and valuable to the evolution of the inner man. As this world is not only a world produced by law, but one that is moved and governed by the operation of natural laws, the law of retribution also works as a law of nature. Therefore punishment suffered is not anything ordered by some Supreme God but the result of the natural operation of the law itself.

In the light of this doctrine

does not man appear as a mere product of nature? Is he not predetermined by the Law of Karma? Though in reality Karma predetermines no one, to many it does appear as a doctrine of Fatalism, pure and simple. Perhaps, Karma's protest against the unscientific view of absolute freedom has also led some to think that it emphasizes iron necessity at the expense of spontaneity or free-will. Much of this confusion will be cleared if Karma is rightly understood. To begin with it must be noted that Karma has a cosmic as well as a psychological aspect. In the former it appears as the universal law of adjustment, in the latter as the principle of ethical causation. Likewise, every deed of the individual produces a twofold effect, the physical and the psychical. The former cannot be changed by the individual however much he may try; but the latter can be controlled by him through self-discipline. Even in Karma itself, Indian thinkers recognize three varieties:—the karmas, which have already begun to take effect in the present life from the deeds of the previous human births, are known as *prarabdha* karmas. But such causes which, though arising out of former existence, are still immature, are called *samçita* or seed-like impressions. And the stock that is now being stored up by actions in this life are classified as *agami* karmas. While karmas of the first group cannot be changed, the two latter ones can be overcome by knowledge. In all these three cases Karma brings about the subjective and objective consequences in relation to which man is free or not-free as the case may be.

It is true that man in this Karmic scheme can neither shirk his responsibility nor have his sins forgiven or blotted out. It is also true that no one but he himself can make atonement for his sins, and that the universal law of cause and effect cannot be set aside in his favour because of his repentance or resolve to live a better life in the future. Karma therefore is fate in the sense that the rewards and punishments of the actions of his former life must be enjoyed or endured, and that his present circumstances are determined by the past. Even here determinism is not of the merely mechanical type, for it (Karma) tells us that there is a continuity between the past and the present. Man is subject to determinism in the real sense only when he is conditioned by external causes. But he is all the time creating his own Karma, and shaping the character of his next birth. And so Karma differs from Fate in that it allows him enough freedom to weave his own future, even though his present is determined by the past. His ruling Destiny, of course, cannot be escaped. Nevertheless, man has power to choose either the external or internal conditions which affect the determination of his will upon his actions. He can either follow the heavenly voice and struggle to

overcome his destiny,—even if the fight be in vain,—or else reach that goal as a willing partner, following the voice of the lower self.

In fact, if man utilizes his powers to the best advantage, he can conquer even his Karma. But to bring that about Karma insists on resolute and ceaseless effort. And this certainly is not consistent with a denial of freedom. Karma must not therefore be interpreted as excluding constant spiritual activity. Karma makes man, in all his endeavours, dependent upon no one save himself, and so his destiny evolves even as he himself ordains it. It is he therefore who creates causes, but all that Karma ever does is to adjust the effect. Even where man appears as free to act, he is conditioned by internal causes; only because such causes are a part of his own nature, he appears as a free agent. Absolute freedom as such, unregulated by laws, is unthinkable, and freedom in the human world obtains only within limits. Because man oscillates between matter and spirit, we find him subject to both necessity and freedom. The physical in him brings him under the sway of iron necessity, while that which is divine makes him assert the freedom of his will. Only as it confronts thus the factors of determinism, does freedom itself receive its full content, since destiny and exertion are two aspects of the one great truth. Therefore it is just such an hypothesis, as effectively combines the elements of truth in the theories of Fate and Free Will, which can explain most satisfactorily the place and function of a conscious being in the natural world. And it is most noteworthy that it is only the law of Karma that reconciles, if any theory does, these irreconcilable doctrines.

Actions affect not the agent only but also those about him. In other words, no one can sin, and suffer its effects alone. Since human beings are interdependent, we have not merely individual suffering but collective suffering also. By virtue of this law of interdependence, the aggregate of individual karma gives us what is known as National Karma, and the sum total of National Karma becomes the Karma of the World. That Karma which results from this interdependence is known as Distributive Karma, and it is this law which provides a solution to the social problem of collective suffering and its relief. It is the want of harmony which is responsible for all pain and misery among the masses, and this, in turn, is due to the disturbance in the equilibrium caused by individual and national selfishness. Slums and red light districts, class and caste distinctions, sexes and their distinctive functions in the affairs of life, labour and capital and their unequal distribution,—all these and the numerous other items of social mal-adjustment are the effects of Karma. How can such sorrow and suffering be eliminated? That which causes untold misery by making us mistake the false for the true, and the true for the false is ignorance. It

binds man to Karma, but knowledge, by dispelling this illusion, sets him free; it leads him further to the attainment of Arhatship or Sainthood, thus rendering him immune from rebirth in the realm of Desire of Form and of Formlessness. Individual suffering can be overcome therefore only by seeking the fruits of the Noble Path of the soul. Inasmuch as each man, who rises to a higher state of soul life, lifts, be it ever so little, the whole body of which he is an integral part, this terrible problem of collective suffering can also be solved only when every individual, having had his spiritual intuition fully opened, has contributed to the general welfare what he could of money, of service and of ennobling ideas and ideals. Only in this way can the broken harmony be re-established, and the balance of National Karma be struck.

In conclusion, we may say that a belief in Karma is of great practical value. By bringing home to man the truth that his happiness or misery,—instead of being the award of an iron-willed or capricious God, or the decree of an inflexible Fate, or even the outcome of Blind Chance,—is entirely the result of whatever he has formerly done himself, Karma strengthens the idea of moral responsibility. Such a conception makes us not only to submit in meek resignation to whatever befalls us in this life but so to live as to avoid a similar fate in the next life, and to work with hope and confidence since the making of the future is still in our power. Further, it helps us to realize that the calamities and inequalities of life, instead of being something mysterious, are but the mere consequences of our previous deeds. And what is more, as a rational solution to the perplexing problem of good and evil it reconciles man to the heart-rending injustices of life. Though many may maintain that Karma, like other theories in religion and ethics, has its own faults and shortcomings, yet in the soundness of its basis and the iron logic of its structure, the doctrine of Karma is colossal and penetrating. Unlike the law of causation as understood in the West, the Law of Karma, as the Regulative Principle of the Universe, operates as effectively in the world of man as it does in the world of Nature. A study of this theory, without prejudice of birth or of early training, may help Western scholars to find that very formula for which they are now in search.

JAGADISAN M. KUMARAPPA

THE THRILL PSYCHOSIS

[**Charles Dernier** is a keen business-man of Petersburg, U. S. A. whose ideals "have proven to be not only a solace but a stimulant in these very hard times". In the following article he writes not of economic depression but about "immorality—extravagance and licence—to which no one seems to be paying serious attention. . . . the press is busy in providing thrills and excuses for thrills".

This article was on its way to us when Professor Wadia was preparing his on "India and Objective Reality" which appeared in our last issue; but this might well be taken as a rejoinder to that article. The striking fact which Mr. Dernier emphasises is the general and widespread prevalence of vice—"the dare-devil catch-phrase 'I'll try anything once!' which has swept U. S. A. like wild fire, must be charged with the first steps of many off the path of rectitude". Indian publicists have a message in this article, as Indian business-men had theirs in Mr. Dernier's "Ideals in Business" which appeared in THE ARYAN PATH for July 1931.—EDS.]

The abnormal craving for thrills, for getting, as it is vulgarly expressed in America, "a kick" out of this or that experience, lies at the root of many of the least desirable recent developments in Western civilization. The appetite for thrills grows by what it feeds on. Excitement is a powerful stimulant. It gives a fillip to jaded nerves and seems to help its addicts to sustain the high tempo of twentieth-century civilization in the West. It affects the emotional nature as narcotics do the physical body. Indulgence creates the thirst for more, while the victim of the thrill psychosis becomes increasingly dependent on the stimulant, until he regards excitement as not only natural but well-nigh indispensable to his very existence. It is a phase of the feverish restlessness of the West, one symptom of the nervous tension under which we live, which is reflected also in the increasing number of marriages that terminate in the divorce court, in the "crime waves," and in the growing populations of our institutions for the insane.

It is but natural, we shall be told, that wage toilers in the machine age should turn to stimuli of senses and emotions for relief from the monotony of their occupations. No one can doubt the desirability of occasional or periodic recreation to relieve the strain of work-a-day existence, but how much of the entertainment and diversion of the present day fulfils the purpose of re-creating those who indulge in them?

We pride ourselves, in most Western countries, on being too civilized to permit the cruelty of bull fights, but the providing of thrills, vicarious or personal, is no less the aim of the brutalizing prize fight, the hunting down of animals in the name of sport, the circus, where human lives are risked and sometimes lost in reckless feats to make the on-

lookers' hearts beat faster, and the cheap amusement park, where thrills on roller coaster and Ferris wheel are offered at first hand.

The culmination of absurdity in the quest of thrills has been reached in the plague of endurance contests from which America has suffered in the last several years. Permanent injury to health has been risked by contestants in the effort to set meaningless records for everything from pole-sitting to "Marathon dancing" in which grace and rhythm are disregarded, all that counts being the length of time exhausted dancers can keep their weary feet shuffling.

Misguided parents pander to the thrill psychosis by giving toy guns to their young sons. The cities in the United States are overrun with youthful bandits, ordering their playmates to "Stick 'em up!" The other day I saw a small boy playing by himself, lunging about him at imaginary foes in a frenzy of murderous fury that made my blood run cold. People with pacifist leanings have been wont to deplore children's drilling and playing soldiers as tending to foster a militaristic spirit, but how much worse to have them playing hold-up men and kidnappers! We lament the prevalence of crime to-day and we do well to lament it, but what of the future when these children, whose repugnance to crime has thus been broken down, shall come to maturity, and what of the responsibility of those who have condoned if not encouraged their subversive sport?

But, however great the contribution of such sensational diversions to emotional strain, they are less harmful than the more subtle thrills offered by the average cinema show with its sex appeal, by the highly emotional combinations of sounds that currently pass for music, and by newspaper accounts of atrocities. The press plays a not inconsiderable part in polluting the race mind and undermining morals through the unwholesome prominence it gives to crime stories and the gusto with which unsavory details are narrated without regard even to the obvious danger of inciting immature minds to imitation. Motion pictures, radio, and the press have tremendous educational and cultural possibilities, but in large measure these are being ignored in favour of supplying what the artificially stimulated appetite of the public demands. Practically all of our commercialized diversions exalt the emotions at the expense of the reasoning faculties, while the higher nature of man is on slim rations indeed.

In the United States, prohibition legislation invested with a thrill the sordidness of drinking intoxicants. The consciousness of defying the law lent zest to the home manufacture and consumption of unpalatable or noxious brews. Attending a social function under the influence of liquor, or having to be assisted home afterward, ceased to be looked upon as a disgrace in many circles. The hip flask

became the badge of sophistication and *savoir faire* among all too many of the rising generation.

It was practically inevitable that this lowering of standards of conduct in one direction should have been paralleled by a distressing increase in promiscuous sex relations among adolescents—the same quest of a thrill at the root of both aberrations. Whether or not a sentence can be as potent for evil as the Hindu Mantras, properly intoned, are held to be for good, there is little doubt that the dare-devil catch phrase, "I'll try anything once!" which has swept U. S. A. like wild-fire, must be charged with the first steps of many off the path of rectitude.

The sometimes well-meaning but always short-sighted advocates of birth control by artificial means are no less victims of the thrill psychosis. They overlook or underestimate the moral value of self-discipline through sex-control and devote their efforts to spreading information on how to evade the natural consequences of self-indulgence. So deeply has the virus penetrated society that we recently had the startling spectacle of the majority of the Committee on Marriage and the Home of what is probably the greatest interdenominational Protestant organization in the New World going on record as favouring this abomination.*

Gambling always has offered relief from the monotony of existence. Betting probably never has been confined to the races, but it has remained for our modern Western civilization to invest it with the dignity of a profession. The wide appeal of the thrill of dabbling in stocks contributed largely to the spectacular rise in fictitious values which preceded the stock market debacle of 1929, from the effects of which the world has not yet recovered.

There is nothing constructive in a thrill. Whatever of good may come of it, as, for example, greater knowledge of aeronautics out of airplane stunting, is quite incidental and the cost of the by-product is too high. The resolve to lead a better and nobler life is commendable, even when it is publicly made, in the emotional transports of an evangelistic revival, but how much greater power and duration may be expected from a vow taken by a man alone, in silent communion with his own higher nature!

The very antithesis of the quest of the average man in the West for thrills is the aim of steadiness, equilibrium, balance, control of the emotions, which has ever been the ideal of the thoughtful in every land, as it is that of the masses in the quiet and contemplative East.

CHARLES DERNIER

* Majority Report, Committee on Marriage and the Home, Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, issued March 21, 1931.

THE RELIGION OF WILLIAM BLAKE

[**John Middleton Murry** wrote on "The Vision of John Keats" in our July issue. The following article is replete with Theosophical teachings especially about Christ and Satan to be found in the Second Volume of *The Secret Doctrine.* —EDS.].

With William Blake, we must take a plunge: the quicker the better. So I take the plunge from his four most famous lines. They have for their title—and their title is important—"Auguries of Innocence".

To see a World in a grain of sand
And a Heaven in a wild flower
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour.

The lines are familiar, even fashionable. But how on earth does one see 'a World in a grain of sand?'

The problem is simple. Is Blake asking us to see something that is in a grain of sand or something that is not in it? The answer to the problem is equally simple, and emphatic. We are required to see something that actually is in a grain of sand.

Blake would have agreed that it did not always happen. There were plenty of days when he could not see it himself. For instance,

When you are under the dominion of a jealous Female
Unpermanent for ever because of Love and Jealousy
You shall want all the Minute Particulars of Life.

"Minute Particulars." Blake was very keen about them above all at the time—in his old age—when he was composing "Jerusalem," from which these words are taken. 'Minute Particulars.' Change but a syllable, and you have "minute particles"—almost exactly "grains of sand".

There is no deception. Blake himself shall speak—from 'Jerusalem' again: page 31. Los, who is the Imagination, looks upon the Fallen Man, Albion. Los and Albion are not two persons. They are the regenerative and unregenerated parts of the one Universal Man. Los explores the fallen Man of whom he is himself the imaginative part.

Los took his globe of fire to search the interiors of Albion's
Bosom, in all the Terrors of friendship entering the caves . . .
And saw every Minute Particular of Albion degraded and murdered
But saw not by whom; they were hidden within in the minute particulars
Of which they had possessed Themselves . . But Los
Search'd in vain; closed from the minutia, he walked difficult.

Imagination finds the going hard except through the Minute Particulars, and these have been possessed and degraded and murdered by an unknown power. Now remember that Albion—the Eternal Man in his fallen state—is also England: not really England, but England serves as a symbol to articulate The Fallen Man. So

Los came down from Highgate through Hackney and Holloway towards London
Till he came to old Stratford and thence to Stepney and the isle
Of Leutha's dogs, thence through the narrows of the River's side
And saw every minute particular: the jewels of Albion running down

The kennels of the streets and lanes as if they
were abhorr'd
Every Universal Form was become barren
mountains of moral
Virtue, and every Minute Particular harden'd
into grains of sand
And all the tendernesses of the soul cast forth
as filth and mire.

The immediate point of my quotation is to show in what, for Blake, the fall of the Fallen Man consists: first, in his Universal Forms becoming barren mountains of moral virtue; and second in "his Minute Particulars hardening into grains of sand". This was the fall of the Fallen Man.

The Fall consists in the Minute Particulars being hardened, by some malignant agency, into grains of sand. So we have a clue, at least, to the real meaning of the first Augury of Innocence.

To see a World in a grain of sand.

This is the Redemption: the changing back of the grain of sand into the Minute Particular which it really is. When that happens we have the first Augury of Innocence. So we begin to see why the word *Augury* is used; it is a harbinger of Innocence to come. And that is very important. Blake is not speaking as he is almost always supposed to be speaking, of the actual innocence of the child in these famous lines; he is speaking of the regained Innocence of the Fallen Man. He is saying: "When you can see a world in a grain of sand—the world that is actually in it; when you can see a heaven in a wild flower—the heaven that is actually there to see—then you know that your Redemption is nigh. You are regaining Innocence." And as we could have corroborated the heaven in a wild flower by "Behold the lilies of the field"—so we corroborate the meaning of Auguries of Innocence by "Except ye become as little children ye shall in no wise enter the Kingdom of Heaven". Of course, Jesus, like Blake, was talking to grown men. He was speaking of a second Innocence: a redemption of the Fallen Man. And of course, like Blake, he was speaking of it as something which happens here and now—not at some far-off time, in some far-off Kingdom—but now, at this moment, here.

And Blake's final symbolism for this redemption from the Fall, this rebirth into Innocence, is intimately connected with his vision of Minute Particulars. For him the Fall of Man consists in his losing this vision of the Minute Particulars; the Redemption consists in his regaining the vision. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that this is the total message of Blake. He enforces it through a thousand forms of recondite imagery, but it all comes back to this simple and mysterious happening.

Now when Blake says that the Fall of Man consists in his losing the vision of the Minute Particulars, does he mean that Man has actually *lost* that vision? Does he mean that at some time in his actual life Man possessed that vision, and now it is gone? The answer is "Yes," and "No". And that is the true answer, which distinguishes Blake, like Keats from Wordsworth, for whom the

vision splendid fades as we enter further into the life of the world, and can only be recaptured in fitful evanescent moments. But Wordsworth could never rid himself of the thought of Annette, or overcome his own sense of sin. He could not attain, as Blake did, that level of experience from which a man can see his past with naked eyes and accept it and know *all* experience as good; that spiritual condition in which even one's own Minute Particulars can be known and loved.

For the doctrine of Minute Particulars applies not merely to the world out there—the objective world—but to the world in here—the subjective world. We have to be able to see a world in *our* grains of sand—the separate experiences of our lives. And that is the meaning of Blake's words in the passage I have quoted:—

Every Universal Form was become barren mountains of moral virtue
And every Minute Particular harden'd into grains of sand
And all the tendernesses of the soul cast forth as filth and mire.

"All the tendernesses of the soul cast forth as filth and mire." —that is what Blake would have said to Wordsworth striving to cast the memory of Annette, as a foul thing, from his soul.

Blake's religion of the Minute Particulars is a terribly subversive religion. It takes us clean beyond "good and evil"; it is indeed aimed directly against the religion of "good and evil". It begins indeed, in Blake's own words, "with a marriage of Heaven and Hell". At the moment when that great discovery fell upon him, and his eyes were opened, he did what Nietzsche did at a like moment, he nakedly proclaimed an absolute reversal of values.

Without Contraries is no progression. Attraction and
Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human existence.
From these contraries spring what the religions call
Good and Evil.
Good is the passive that obeys Reason. Evil is the active springing from Energy.

And again:

The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of
Angels and God, and at liberty when he wrote of Devils and Hell, is because he was a true Poet and of the
Devil's party without knowing it.

So, the true Poet—which is Blake's name for the man of creative genius—is necessarily "evil," what Goethe called the "dæmonic" man. Thus, to take the instance which was of decisive importance to Blake himself—the instance of Jesus—the last thing it is generally desired to remember about him was what a profoundly revolutionary spirit he was. He was, within the most completely religious society in the world in his life-time, a complete rebel: a complete criminal. That, we say to ourselves, or others say to us, is because the Jews were an evil and adulterous generation, which is, of course, ridiculous nonsense. In point of fact, the Jews of his day were a more religious society than we English are.

In what did the rebellion—the creative newness—of Jesus consist? Blake was quite clear in his own mind about this: it is the theme of "The Everlasting Gospel".

If moral virtue was Christianity
Christ's pretensions were all vanity;

And Caiaphas and Pilate men
Praiseworthy . . . .

That is how it begins. And if this is true, it follows that the Churches have turned Christianity into the very thing which Jesus fought. And that was Blake's conviction. He came to be absolutely convinced that he understood the true teaching of Jesus, and the moment he was convinced of that, he absolutely devoted himself, body and soul, to propagating the true gospel. Unless this be grasped, the whole of "Milton," the whole of "Jerusalem," all the lovely visions of the Book of Job, will be meaningless.

It is remarkable that there are no less than six substantial versions of "The Everlasting Gospel". I don't suppose Blake was satisfied with any of them. Perhaps he was attempting the impossible—to give a complete description of the Jesus who was real to him. The two things he wishes to stress are perfectly clear: The first of them is this: that Jesus was a rebel—that he was imbued not with the Reason that is Good, but with the Energy that is Evil.

Was Jesus born of a Virgin pure
With narrow soul and looks demure?
If He intended to take on Sin
The Mother should an harlot been . . .
Or what was it which He took on
That He might bring salvation?
A Body subject to be tempted
From neither pain nor grief exempted?
Or such a body as might not feel
The passions that with sinners deal?
Yes, but they say He never fell.
Ask Caiaphas, for he can tell.

Caiaphas speaks:

He mock'd the Sabbath, and He mock'd
The Sabbath's God, and He unlock'd
The evil spirits from their shrines
And turn'd Fishermen to divines;
O'erturned the tent of secret sins
And its Golden cords and pins . . .
"Obey your parents!"—What says He?
"Woman, what have I to do with thee?
No earthly parents I, confess:
I am doing My Father's business."
He scorn'd Earth's parents, scorned Earth's God,
And mock'd the one and the other's Rod;
His seventy Disciples sent
Against Religion and Government . . .
He left His Father's trade to roam
A wand'ring vagrant without home;
And thus He others' labour stole
That He might live above control.
The publicans and harlots He
Selected for His company,
And from the Adulteress turn'd away
God's righteous law, that lost its prey.

But the supreme offence—this is the second of the two points which is stressed in every version of "The Everlasting Gospel"—is that Jesus utterly abolished the Law.

The Moral Virtues in their pride
Did o'er the world triumphant ride
In Wars and Sacrifice for sin,
And souls to Hell ran trooping in . . .
The Accuser, Holy God of All
This Pharisaic Worldly Ball
Amidst them in his Glory Beams
Upon the Rivers and the Streams
Then Jesus rose and said to me:
"Thy Sins are all forgiven Thee"
Loud Pilate Howl'd, loud Caiaphas yell'd
When they the Gospel Light beheld.
It was when Jesus said to me
"Thy sins are all forgiven Thee."

That sounds innocuous, and almost Orthodox. But Blake happens to be speaking not of something which happened long ago, or something which will happen hereafter. He is speaking of the here and now—of "all *This* Pharisaic Wordly Ball," where Moral Virtue and the Law reign supreme. And what is more, he is identifying himself with Jesus. Pilate and Caiphas are *his* judges; Satan, the great Accuser, is the Holy God.

Who then is the Jesus who

acquits Blake, accused by the Christian God of moral virtue, who is Satan? If Blake has identified himself with Jesus, who is the Jesus who declares that his sins are forgiven? The answer is the inevitable one. It is Blake himself. But not Blake in his own ego. For it is not merely presumption, but a downright spiritual impossibility for a man in his own ego to forgive himself. It is the Eternal Man in Blake himself who forgives his own sins—and Blake's name for this Eternal Man, in himself and other men, is Jesus.

But far more important to Blake, as it was probably far more important to Jesus himself, was the fact that this Eternal Man was Everyman. He was, so to speak, a condition that every man could attain to—the condition wherein, in Tchehov's words, "all things are forgiven, and it would be strange not to forgive". And this condition is an impersonal condition. Jesus himself never said "I forgive you"; he said: "You are forgiven." For the profound and simple fact is that "forgiveness" is not of the ego, not of the self, at all. Where the condition of "forgiveness" is, there the ego is not. And this profound and simple fact is the reason why Jesus, who discovered this condition of "forgiveness" in himself, or rather through himself, was compelled to attribute it to God. For Jesus, this condition *was* God.

Now, manifestly, if the condition of "forgiveness," the condition of the Eternal Man, is one which negates the condition of the "ego," then it follows that the way to achieve it is by an annihilation of the "ego," or the self, as Blake calls it. The self is the home of Good and Evil; it is that which makes judgments of Good and Evil. And Blake's particular name for the self is the Spectre—he calls it the Spectre because the act of judgment is deadly and because it can be exorcised, made to vanish away; because the act of judgment is only a Negation. It denies this, as evil, and asserts that, as good. Now perhaps we can understand what Blake is trying to say in "Milton" (p. 46).

All that can be annihilated must be annihilated
That the Children of Jerusalem may be redeemed from slavery.
There is a Negation, and there is a Contrary:
The Negation must be destroy'd to redeem the Contraries.
The Negation is the Spectre, the Reasoning Power in Man:
This is a false body, an Incrustation over my Immortal
Spirit, a Selfhood which must be put off and annihilated always.
To cleanse the Face of my Spirit by self-examination
To bathe in the waters of Life, to wash off the Not Human,
I come in Self-annihilation and the grandeur of Inspiration.

It is nominally Milton who speaks; but it is Milton's spirit which has descended from Eternity and entered into Blake. As a matter of fact, it is simply the Eternal Man who is speaking. Blake has created this Milton: he has, by his own participation in the Eternal Man, "redeemed" Milton.

The Contraries are Good and Evil, and the Negation is

that which judges them as Good and Evil. Annihilate the Negation, and the Contraries are "redeemed". Good and Evil become both positive, in the sense that "Without Contraries there is no Progression"—no Life. Good and Evil, and the Negation (or the Spectre) which maintains them in that deadly fixation:—these constitute the threefold, or Sexual, Man. And, as Blake says on the 4th page of Milton, "The Sexual is Threefold, the Human is Fourfold". And the Human is Fourfold, because it has become the home of the Eternal Man, who is born first by the annihilation of the Spectre, and the consequent redemption of the Contraries. When the Contraries are redeemed, the Spectre which has been annihilated is also redeemed, and once redeemed, there is no longer any harm in it, for it is recognised simply as an inevitable and necessary condition of existence in time. Though annihilated, it still exists, and the Eternal Man serenely acknowledges and accepts it.

But, as Goethe said, we conquer our eternity from day to day, and the mere fact that we must live in a world of Good and Evil, where incessant judgments of Good and Evil are a condition of life, makes it necessary that the fourfold Human should ever be on his guard against any partial "incrustation of the Immortal Spirit by the False Body of the Selfhood". This is what Blake means when he says that this False Body of the Selfhood "must be put off and annihilated *alway*". No *real* relapse into the Threefold Sexual is ever again possible, once the Spectre has been annihilated, and restored by the Spirit into a disciplined and harmonious existence: nevertheless the supremacy of the Spirit has to be asserted continuously in life, paradoxical though that may sound. And this conflict in time between the Threefold Sexual and the Fourfold Human, this usurpation of the place of the Spirit by the Spectre, is precisely the happening in which, for Blake, consists the Fall of Man regarded as an eternal event. In his symbolism, Urthona is Spirit, Urizen the Spectre or Reason; and the rebellion of Urizen against Urthona and the usurpation of Urthona's rightful throne by Urizen, is the great drama of the soul to which Blake in his prophetic books constantly returns. Thus the Fall of Man consists in the disruption of the fourfold Human, and the consequent degeneration into the threefold Sexual. The Negation is established, and the Contraries become sterile opposites. This, in Blake's view, is the condition of human beings until they are regenerated.

But—this is important—this Fall of Man is not an event in time. As far as I can see, Blake did not at any time really believe that the individual had been fourfold and Human, and had fallen—whether at birth, or at the end of age of childish innocence—into the threefold sexual. In other words, the regeneration of the

threefold into the fourfold Man was not a return to any former condition, it was the achievement of a creatively new condition. But this condition was so manifestly the goal of human life, that it seemed to Blake that it must be the essence, the fundamental reality of human life. As essence, it was eternal. Therefore it could be symbolically represented as the condition from which Man fell.

This brings us, hard and sharp, against the mystery of the relation of Eternity to Time. And also, I am glad to say, it brings us up against it from the right direction—from the only direction in which the mystery of Time and Eternity appears the pregnant mystery it veritably is and not a barren intellectual paradox. Actual experience is the only solution of that mystery; and to actual experience it simply ceases to be mysterious. Any one who knows at first hand the condition of the Fourfold Human is perfectly clear about the relation between Time and Eternity; and no one else can be. Such a man will know without my telling him that Eternity is in the here and now: and he will also know that since it is always the discovery of an individual experience, there are as many ways of expressing it as there are people who discover it. Thus, when Blake says, simply and beautifully "Eternity is in love with the productions of Time," he is saying precisely what Spinoza said with equal simplicity and beauty when he said that *sub specie aeternitatis omnis existentia est perfectio*; or again precisely what Keats said:

Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty, that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

JOHN MIDDLETON MURRY

Do not believe that lust can ever be killed out if gratified or satiated, for this is an abomination inspired by Mara. It is by feeding vice that it expands and waxes strong, like to the worm that fattens on the blossom's heart.

The rose must re-become the bud, born of its parent stem before the parasite has eaten through its heart and drunk its life-sap.

The golden tree puts forth its jewel-buds before its trunk is withered by the storm.

The pupil must regain *the child-state he has lost* ere the first sound can fall upon his ear.

The light from the ONE MASTER the one unfading golden light of Spirit, shoots its effulgent beams on the Disciple from the very first. Its rays thread through the thick, dark clouds of matter.

Now here, now there, these rays illumine it, like sun-sparks light the earth through the thick foliage of the jungle growth. But, O Disciple, unless the flesh is passive, head cool, the Soul as firm and pure as flaming diamond, the radiance will not reach the *chamber*, its sunlight will not warm the heart, nor will the mystic sounds of the Akasic heights reach the ear, however eager, at the initial stage.

—*The Voice of the Silence*

ALCHEMY IN CHINA*

[**Dr. E. J. Holmyard, M.A., M. Sc.**, is a scientist, who unlike most of his compeers has not neglected the search for the knowledge which the old-world possessed, and which is now lost; nor has he hesitated studying and expounding a subject like alchemy which is taboo to the ordinary scientist, for, a belief in it has been regarded as superstition.

In this article Dr. Holmyard reviews the history of alchemy in China. The fascinating story on pp. 747-8 raises the old interesting query—how far have teachers of soul-science, who were also adepts in alchemy, used alchemical terms and processes in a symbolic way? To transmute the lead of passion (kama) into the pure yellow metal of intuition (buddhi) has been a theosophic expression in use for centuries; and there are others. The Sanskrit word for metal is *dhatu* (धातु:) and it also means elementary constituents of the body; and more, the same word, as a suffix, occurs in *Mano-dhatu*, Mind-metal, *Kama-dhatu*, Feeling-metal, etc. Again, the human body is supposed to consist of 84,000 dhatus, and Emperor Asoka is said to have built 84,000 *dhatu-gopas* or *dagobas*, in honour of every cell of the Buddha's body, each of which has now become a *Dharma-dhatu* or Holy Relic. These *dagobas*, moreover, show that their original builders regarded them as symbolical of the human body.

We hope that some Indian scientist-scholar will work on the hint given in the closing sentence of this essay, and search for those MSS. in this ancient land.
—EDS.]

"Transmutation is a natural phenomenon of the universe. Why, then, should there be any suspicion that gold and silver may not be made from other substances?" Such was the question put to sceptics by the celebrated Taoist philosopher Ko-Hung, nicknamed Pao Pu Tzu or "Old Sober-Sides," who wrote on philosophy and alchemy in the fourth century of our era. The fact that, even at this early date, there were men in China who doubted the possibility of metallic transmutation, would seem to prove that alchemy was already well established in that country; for, if we may argue from the course of events in other regions, unbelief in alchemical pretensions never arose until some considerable time after the appearance of the Divine Art. Native authors, indeed, ascribe a high antiquity to Chinese alchemy, a claim that, if substantiated, would render it possible (perhaps even probable) that the alchemical lore of Alexandria, Islam and Latin Christendom was originally derived—as so much else was certainly derived—from

*Authorities :—

Dr. O. S. Johnson: *A Study of Chinese Alchemy*. Shanghai, 1928.

Prof. T. L. Davis and Dr. Lu-Ch'iang Wu: "The advice of Wei Po-Yang to the Worker in Alchemy" (*The Nucleus*, March, 1931); "The Pill of Immortality" (*The Technology Review*, XXXIII, No. 8, May, 1931; "Chinese Alchemy" (*The Scientific Monthly*, XXXI, 225-235, 1930).

Principal H. E. Stapleton and Dr. R. F. Azo: "Chemistry in Iraq and Persia in the Tenth Century A. D." (*Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, VIII, 317-418, 1927).

the enigmatical Celestial Empire.

Until the last decade or so, the problem of alchemy in China had received but little attention from historians of science, partly, no doubt, on account of the inherent difficulties of the subject, and partly from the fact that few scholars interested in the development of science were adequately versed in classical Chinese. On the other hand, few competent sinologists knew anything of alchemy. The inevitable result of such regrettable ignorance was that the Chinese were either credited with discoveries that, even on general grounds, it was extremely unlikely that they ever made, or equally without foundation accused of plagiarism, falsification of records, and bodily appropriation of Western, Indian or Muslim ideas afterwards alleged to be indigenous.

With a rapidly increasing realization that a knowledge of the development of science is of vital importance in modern culture, the desirability of filling so serious a lacuna has happily been perceived, and several scholars—notably Tenney L. Davis, Lu'Ch'iang Wu, Obed S. Johnson, H. E. Stapleton and R. F. Azo—have already placed the matter upon a much more satisfactory footing. While there is still very much to be done—indeed, the investigation is yet in its initial stages—a great deal of first-hand information has been obtained, and some of the principal features of the territory have been clearly discerned. As most students of the occult would have anticipated, the results are of considerable interest and of at least equal significance.

The most striking fact about Chinese alchemy that emerges from the recent work upon the subject is its extreme age. Western alchemy appears to have originated among the Alexandrian Greeks of the second and third centuries A. D., but, if the records are to be trusted, Chinese alchemy was by this time already several centuries old. In the *Shih Chi* ("Historical Memoirs" of Ssu Ma Ch'ien, who wrote in 116 B. C., it is related that in 221 B. C. the adept Hsu Shih led several thousand young men and women on an expedition to discover three mountains or islands, P'eng lai, Fang Chan and Yin Chou, upon which was to be obtained the drug to compound the Elixir of Life. One of the principal objects of alchemy was thus deliberately sought by the Chinese four or five hundred years before Zosimos the Panopolitan wrote some of the first Greek alchemical treatises.

In the following century, the alchemist Li Shao Chun informed the Emperor Wu Ti (156-87 B. C.) that cinnabar may be transformed into yellow gold by the sacrifice of the furnace. Were such gold converted into cups for drinking and platters for eating, he who ate and drank therefrom would find his life prolonged; and if he employed this longevity to visit the immortals upon P'eng lai he might himself attain to immortality. Entranced

by this seductive vision, Wu Ti performed in person the sacrifices of the furnace, and busied himself in chemical experiments with cinnabar and a great variety of other substances. The chronicler adds, however, that although much money was spent, the Emperor did not succeed in finding the immortals and immortality. This lack of success did not deter a prince of Huai Nan, named Liu An, from enthusiastic search for the secrets of immortality and transmutation. Writing in the latter half of the second century B. C., he asserted that gold slowly grows in the earth by a natural process, and that it is evolved from the immaterial principle underlying the universe, passing from one form to another up to silver and then from silver to gold. This idea became a commonplace among the medieval alchemists of Islam and Europe, and was perhaps one of the most long-lived of all alchemical tenets. Abu'l-Qasim al-'Iraqi, for example, who flourished at Cairo about 1260 A. D., says that the prime matter of metals is one, and that it reaches its limit of perfection by natural degrees—from the "unripe" or base metals, such as lead, to the "riper" silver and finally the perfect gold. Geber thought that the formation of gold, by natural processes, required from one thousand to ten thousand years. The Chinese estimate was nearer the lower of these two limits: native cinnabar, at the end of three hundred years, becomes lead; after two hundred years, the lead is transformed into silver; lastly, when two hundred further years have elapsed, the silver is transformed by the Grand Harmony of the universe into purest gold. It is not without interest that a series of transmutations of the elements—uranium to ionium, ionium to radium, radium to radon, radon to polonium and polonium to lead—is actually taking place in Nature; though modern chemistry can find no evidence to show that gold or silver may be in course of production by analogous changes.

The oldest book in the Chinese language wholly devoted to the subject of alchemy is the *Ts'an T'ung Ch'i* (Akinness of the Three), which is said to have been composed about 142 A. D., by the "Father of Alchemy" Wei Po-Yang. The authorities are almost unanimous in regarding this book as authentic and its author as an historical personage, though it is only right to say that some scholars maintain Wei Po-Yang to have been a purely legendary figure and assert that no more is known with certainty of the date of the *Ts'an T'ung Ch'i* than that it belongs to the first millennium after Christ. According to the usually accepted tradition, Wei Po-Yang was a native of Wu, in the modern province of Kiangsu. He was an alchemist, and a philosopher of the Taoist school; he had no love for the things of this world, but preferred to spend his life in a secluded valley where he could

find simplicity, quiet, peace and leisure for reflection. A time at length arrived when he undertook the preparation of the Pill of Immortality. Accompanied by three disciples (of the faith of two of whom he had private doubts) he went into the mountains and began the necessary chemical operations. What exotic drugs were employed in compounding the precious medicine we can, alas, no longer ascertain; but the White Tiger, the Blue Dragon, the Flowing Pearl and the Red Bird were among them, while the Ting or furnace was the principal piece of apparatus. After much anxious care and skilful manipulation, the Pill of Immortality was at last complete. Now Wei Po-Yang had brought with him to the mountains a white dog, and to test his disciples' faith he spoke to them as follows: "We should first assure ourselves that the medicine has been properly prepared by administering a little of it to the dog. If the dog dies we ought not ourselves to take the Pill, but if no harm befalls it we shall know that the medicine is efficacious." This he said, knowing that the first effect of the medicine was to cause a temporary state resembling death. Wei Po-Yang then gave the dog a portion of the Pill, and the animal immediately collapsed and apparently died. "The medicine is not yet complete," said the alchemist, "but since I should be ashamed to return without success, I must myself take it." With this, he swallowed the Pill and died. The three disciples stood aghast, but one of them, with great faith, refused to believe that his master had so behaved without deliberate intention, and followed the example thus awfully set him; he too expired. The other two disciples, with much common sense but little courage, remarked to one another that it would be better to live a few years longer without the Pill of Immortality than to take it and die an instantaneous death. They therefore departed from the mountain to make arrangements for the double funeral. Soon after they had gone, Wei Po-Yang revived, and, by the administration of a little more of the medicine, was able to revive both his disciple and the dog. All three had attained immortality. They went their way, but Wei Po-Yang was courteous enough to send a letter of thanks to the two unbelieving disciples, by a woodman they chanced to meet. "The disciples," naïvely adds the chronicle, "were filled with regrets when they read the letter."

It is characteristic of early Chinese alchemy that the stress is laid rather upon the Elixir of Life or the Pill of Immortality than upon the Elixir of Transmutation. We may surmise that the reason lies in the fact that, until a comparatively late period, gold was not especially prized by the Chinese, even though they regarded it as the perfect metal. It was only through contact with foreign civilizations that gold finally acquired the factitious value that is

one of the most remarkable psychological phenomena the world has ever experienced. "Longevity" says Wei Po-Yang in the *Ts'an T'ung Ch'i*, "is of primary importance in the great triumph." The non-corrodibility of gold rendered it one of the most precious of substances for purposes of compounding the elixir, but there was scarcely any need to resort to transmutation processes in a country so naturally rich in gold as China. Yet the artificial production gold seems to have been attempted (as we have already seen) as early as the days of the Emperor Wu Ti, and, though it is always relegated to a subordinate position, the technique of transmutation is a constant feature of Chinese alchemy.

The chief exponent of the Art in the fourth century A. D.,—the period when Alexandrian alchemy was at its zenith,—was Ko-Hung, a native of Chiang-ning Fu in Kiangsu. He is stated to have lived from approximately 281 to 361, and is well-known as the author of important works on medicine, magic, alchemy and Taoist philosophy. The treatise that he wrote under the pseudonym of Pao Pu Tzu appeared in 330 A. D., but has not hitherto been translated, in its entirety, into any European language. In the fourth, eleventh and sixteenth sections of *Nuy Pe'en* or "Inner Chapters" of this work, Ko-Hung describes methods of making the Yellow (or gold) and White (or silver) Elixirs, and mentions the curious tenet that a man may prolong his life by taking medicines made from plants, but can only "lose his shadow" and become immortal by the use of the Divine Elixir made from minerals and metals. It was, however, necessary to carry out the preparation of this Elixir upon a mountain, in a lonely spot, only two or three being present. There should be fasting for one hundred days previously, and perfect purification of the body. The participants should all be believers in the doctrine (*i. e.* the doctrine of Taoism); and persons who might be likely to ridicule the undertaking should be kept in ignorance of it, otherwise the preparation of the elixir would fail. As to the drugs to be employed, many of the Chinese terms used to describe them have not yet been identified, but the following substances were certainly included: red and yellow sulphides of arsenic (*i. e.*, realgar and orpiment), sulphur, cinnabar, alum, salt, a blue mineral (possibly lapis lazuli or blue vitriol), white arsenic, oyster shells, mica, chalk and the resin of the pine tree. The resulting Elixir, when thrown on to mercury, or a mixture of lead and tin in an iron pot, converted the metal into gold or silver. Taken as a medicine for one hundred days, it made a man immortal, and conferred upon him freedom from all disease and the power of passing unscathed through fire and water.

A major problem for the future is to gauge the relationship of Chinese alchemy with that of Alexandria, Islam and Western Europe. That there are striking similari-

ties is obvious upon even a casual glance, but whether these similarities are due to coincidence or to direct affiliation is a mystery that has yet to be solved. The Alexandrian chemists considered that the transmutation of metals was accompanied, if not occasioned, by transmutation of colour, and the same idea persists in the treatises of Muslim chemists and of their European followers. It is therefore worthy of note that Ko-Hung has the same conceit. "Whiteness," he says, "is the property of lead. But if you cause it to become red, the lead will change into cinnabar. Redness is the property of cinnabar. But if you cause cinnabar to become white, it will change into lead". The exhortations to the disciple to lead an austere life, and to refrain from divulging the secrets of alchemy to the vulgar; the insistence upon the importance of mercury, lead and gold in compounding the elixirs; the symbolic and mystical language used by the initiates; the magical practices closely bound up with the Art; the association of metals with the sun, moon and planets all these characteristics are common to Chinese alchemy and to the more familiar alchemy of the West. It is possible that they arose independently; it is possible that China drew from Alexandria (as she assuredly did, later, from Islam); and it is possible that we must seek a still more remote common origin for both Alexandrian and Chinese alchemy; but the resemblance between them is so close that no more fascinating enquiry could be desired by an historian of science. Is the connecting link to be found in India? Will further investigation reveal the birthplace of alchemy to lie in that ancient Aryan civilization which spread its influence eastward, westward and northward—and southward was limited only by the sea? That question cannot yet be answered, but perhaps the revelation awaits us among the unread manuscripts in the great libraries of Indian princes.

ERIC J. HOLMYARD

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

(Considered from a Monadistic or Personalistic standpoint)

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Without entering upon the academic controversy of pessimism and optimism, let us examine in what sense evil is a reality. The chief source of difficulty has been that evil has been considered to be a ***principle***, opposed to the principle of good, and that some measure of absolute negativity has been attributed to it. But such a supposition cannot be justified. Spinoza long ago maintained that looked at from the eternal point of view evil as a principle has no reality. This is corroborated by the fact that evil is only *relative* in character. What is an evil to one person is not so to another; and, again, what is an evil under one set of circumstances is not so under another set of circumstances. Everything has a certain position and value in the system of the universe and it is only when taken out of its position or ascribed a different value that it comes to appear as an evil. Therefore, evil has reality only as constituting a hindrance; and this notion of hindrance lies at the basis of our common notion of evil as something detrimental to one's interest or purpose. But such hindrance is not absolutely detrimental to one's interest or purpose, but is a necessary condition for their furtherance. Let us turn to the particular forms of evil, named moral and physical, and try to determine what they imply.

Moral evil: Throughout life there ensues a struggle between reason and sensibility, or, on a monadistic or personalistic theory between the ends and purposes of the dominant monad and of the subordinate—monads. Moral life progresses through moral evils, such as disrespect for the rights of others, violation of duty, and personal vices. For instance, excessive drinking, though in one sense it implies a sort of satisfaction for the wants of the body—the organism composed of the subordinate monads,—it is held to be a positive moral evil, inasmuch as it is a hindrance to the self-realization of the moral individual. Perhaps the greatest difficulty that confronts the monadistic or personalistic theory that we are advocating here, consists in the anomaly that if drink satisfies in a way some sort of craving of the subordinate monads, how is it that it is deleterious to the subordinate monads themselves; and how can it be compatible with the notion that the spirit is the

basis of things as implied in our theory? Let us first answer the question from the point of view of the subordinate monads themselves. It is true that excessive drinking soon leads to the deterioration of the bodily organism and its premature death yet, perhaps, the misconception lies in supposing that death is an ultimate evil and an absolute loss. From the monadistic or personalistic point of view death is simply a dissolution of a particular sort of organization of the monads, and far from being an ultimate loss may prove to be beneficial in some future set of circumstances, and from a different point of view. The present organization of the monads being founded on some sort of 'agreement' or 'fitting in,' any dissolution or breaking away from the established organization cannot be viewed as wholly detrimental to their welfare, though it may be relatively so. Though it is very difficult to corroborate this contention by scientific evidence, yet we may rest it on the supposition that the ultimate ground of things is spiritual. In the second place, let us look at this problem from the point of view of the dominant monad or the individual. Obviously, excessive drinking is a positive moral evil to the individual though he may not be conscious of it, for man does not desire evil *knowingly*. Any premature death of the bodily organism is no doubt an evil or hindrance to the self-realization of the individual, who has to realise himself in and through the body; he being the dominant unit in the present commonwealth of different units with diverse and conflicting interests, it is his duty to preserve the organization as long as he can by keeping it in a healthy condition and 'in tone'. Any deviation from this responsibility is a positive moral evil. The present body possesses its chief value *mainly* because of the dominant monad; what may not be an evil from the point of view of the subordinate monads, may be a positive hindrance from that of the dominant monad. In this sense evil is positive, but it is not absolute. The essential condition of the consciousness of duty is a conflict between reason and sensibility, or between the dominant monad and the subordinate monads. When the higher self or reason prevails and prompts us to act upon the principle suggested by it, we are said to do our duty and the result is a moral good; but when mere sensibility prevails and prompts us to do an act we often fail to do our duty and the result is a moral evil. The chief duty of the individual lies in developing the higher powers of reason and in subordinating and in bringing into harmony the functions of the subordinate monads. And this is not only good for the individual, but also for the subordinate monads.

Self-realization is only possible through the growth of self-consciousness and self-consciousness arises out of the interaction between the self and the not-self or other selves. This process of

working out its own perfection is called gathering experience and it is acquired by way of trial and error. "Where several possibilities are open," observes Dr. Ward, "a creature acting on its own initiative can only find out the right one by way of trial and often of error. Such error we may say is an evil; but we cannot straight away call it a superfluous evil, still less an absolute evil, if it is an inevitable incident of experience as such, and if in general the experience is worth what it costs". (*Realm of Ends*, p. 356). Yet in spite of these pitfalls the end does not depend on mere chance and is not uncertain of being realized.

Physical evil: Physical evil is what is caused by nature without or within us. Nature without us thwarts our needs and purposes in many ways. An unfavourable climate, storms, lightnings, earthquakes, etc., are external agencies that are taken to oppose our needs and purposes, and to be positively injurious to us. Some defects of nature within us, *e. g.*, infirmities and diseases, are supposed to be no less injurious to the realization of our end. This supposition again seems to be totally unfounded. Though it is impossible to prove that these 'evils' have a place in the economy of nature, it is equally impossible to show that they are superfluous. The view that such 'evils' have a real place in the economy of nature presents no insuperable difficulty. External nature is a system of monads also plastic and capable of experience and differ from us not in kind but only in degree of mental development. They are also intent on the betterment of their condition, and each has an end to attain. If we are warranted in asserting so much, then it would be a mistake to suppose that such physical evils are absolute or superfluous, without the recognition that the physical condition which may be unfavourable to us may be favourable to another, as the wind that is good for the homeward bound will be bad for that bound outwards.

From such considerations, then, one may urge that evil is an hindrance only, is relative and is not a principle. Moreover this hindrance is the essential condition of progress. It is only in surmounting it that advance is made. This is a stern truth and cannot be denied. We can therefore say that at least a temporary solidarity obtains between good and evil. Even the worst sort of disease is not an unmixed evil, in some cases it immensely enriches the spiritual life of the sufferer. In a word, there is no dualism of good and evil. The existence of this hindrance may be traced to a misunderstanding on the part of individuals resulting from ignorance. Hence we do find the world-wide association between evil and ignorance. The problem of evil presents the greatest difficulty in the face of the assertion of the moral order of the universe. But the root of this difficulty lies in the conception of the flagrant dualism of matter and spirit, the former of

which has been considered as the stumbling block in the way of self-realization of spirit. But on a monadistic or personalistic conception of the world this difficulty is greatly relieved.

A monad of higher mental development may be said to encounter hindrance when in its self-realization it finds opposition from monads of lower mental development, with their own ends to realize; if the monad of a higher mental development cannot avoid such opposition then it may be spoken of as being in a lapsed condition and such "lapse" may be described as an evil *to it*. But such lapses have a meaning and necessity for other monads of lower development; because, between these monads there obtains a solidarity, an interdependence. It is only through overcoming hindrance that positive advance is possible. Without any hindrance the advance would be poor in contents and might be likened to the 'fugitive and cloistered virtue' that is feeble and imperfect compared with the virtue that 'sallies forth and sees her adversary'. A world without hindrance could never become a moral world.

But all this applies to the present world and to the present circumstances. Evolution implies at one extreme a world beyond good and evil where evil is no more. At other extreme it would imply a world where evil is impossible because good is impossible. The human world lies between these two extremes, where evil is at once possible and avoidable. And if the notion of the ultimate ground of things as spiritual be true, then human evolution can fitly be described as proceeding towards the establishment of a moral order in the true sense.

J. K. MAJUMDAR

"The real evil proceeds from human intelligence and its origin rests entirely with reasoning man who dissociates himself from Nature. Humanity then alone is the true source of evil. . . . It is not nature that creates diseases, but man. The latter's mission and destiny in the economy of nature is to die his natural death brought by old age . . . . Food, sexual relations, drink, are all natural necessities of life ; yet excess in them brings on disease, misery, suffering, mental and physical, and the latter are transmitted as the greatest evils to future generations, the progeny of the culprits. Ambition, the desire of securing happiness and comfort for those we love, by obtaining honours and riches, are praiseworthy natural feelings but when they transform man into an ambitious cruel tyrant, a miser, a selfish egotist they bring untold misery on those around them ; on nations as well as on individuals. All this then—food, wealth, ambition, and a thousand other things we have to leave unmentioned, becomes the source and cause of evil whether in its abundance or through its absence. Become a glutton, debauchee, a tyrant, and you become the originator of diseases, of human suffering and misery. Lack all this and you starve, you are despised as a *nobody* and the majority of the herd, your fellow men, make of you a sufferer your whole life. Therefore it is neither nature nor an imaginary Deity that has to be blamed, but human nature made vile by *selfishness*."

MAHATMA K. H.

FIVE LIGHTS AT THE CROSS ROADS

V.—SIMEON BEN YOHAI

[**Geoffrey West** concludes a fascinating series of five biographies of spiritual heroes not widely known. He wrote on " Ptolemy Soter", " Apollonius of Tyana, " " Simon Magus, " and " Hillel " in our March, May, July and September issues.–EDS.]

Hillel must stand as in many ways the ideal type of the initiate, deep in knowledge yet declaring but little save to those worthy and, therefore, no less discreet. Yet is it strange that to glimpse more than the merest outline of his teaching one has to go to so much less attractive, indeed so much more *narrowly* national a figure as Simeon ben Yohai, pupil of Akiba, who was pupil of Joshua ben Hananiah, who was pupil of Johanan ben Zakkai, who was pupil of Hillel. The character of Simeon, as presented on one hand in his life and on the other in the works ascribed to him, is so self-contradictory that some writers have suggested, in the face of the force of all tradition, that he was coldly rationalistic in his teachings, that he did nothing to investigate the hidden meanings of the scriptures, that he represented in fact a decisive reaction against the Kabbalistic tendencies of his master Akiba, and that his supposed authorship of the *Zohar* is due simply to the once common custom of including in the general title of a work the first name mentioned in the text! Yet, as A. E. Waite admitted, it is not easy to accept a tradition for a teaching and at the same time reject its leading figure.

The anomaly remains, only to be resolved by ascribing to Simeon a private as well as a public character. In the latter capacity he appears as a man of uncompromising strength of will and dominating personality, proud, quick to anger, cold, ascetic, superior, dogmatic, strict, severe. He was born in Galilee probably towards the end of the first century A. D. Following the siege of Jerusalem Johanan ben Zakkai had re-established "the school of Hillel" at Jabneh with the consent of Vespasian, and there created a new centre of Judaism inheriting the authority of the temporarily scattered Sanhedrin. The second Gamaliel succeeded him, and in a day of dwindling power and prestige strengthened both by healing the breach between the followers of Hillel and those of Shammai. To Jabneh came Simeon to study first perhaps under Joshua ben Hananiah and subsequently at the feet of the mystic and kabbalist Akiba, his teacher for thirteen years. He left to live at Sidon, but returned frequently to consult with his beloved master, and when the latter was imprisoned by the Ro-

mans (who at last, in 132, flayed him to death) Simeon continued to visit him in his cell. Akiba had recognised Simeon's merit, and among all his pupils "ordained" only him and one other. But instead of being proud of such distinction Simeon was angered to share it; he felt that first place belonged to him alone, and Akiba had to sooth him with "soft words".

This curious spirit of pride was to find expression on at least one other even more notable occasion, and under circumstances which really do suggest a deep-rooted defect in Simeon's character. He regarded the Romans as tyrants, and speaking his mind too freely was condemned to death. To escape that penalty he fled with his son to a secret cave, there to live for thirteen years, fed by a miraculous date-tree. The period was passed in the study of the Pentateuch, and in instruction in the mysteries by such sublime masters as Moses and Elijah. He grew ripe in wisdom, yet when at the end of twelve years he was called forth from the cave his first action was to cast scorn upon the workers in the fields whose labours left them little time for meditation on the scriptures. For this unjust presumption he and his unfortunate son were condemned to a further penitential year, but when he re-emerged his knowledge was found to be unsurpassed among all his fellow-countrymen. He established a school at Meron, and there lived for many years revered as a great teacher. Strange powers were ascribed to him, and his success when he carried to Rome a petition against oppressive decrees was attributed to his magical gifts. To the end, however, he seems to have displayed needless insistence in claiming a unique merit for himself and his son, declaring that if but two living persons deserved to enter heaven, they would be chosen! Yet did not Jesus (who also cursed the barren fig-tree) upon occasion make equally large claims?—sometimes it is a very fine line which must be drawn between presumption and a certain knowledge.

As a public teacher Simeon was dogmatic and definitive without being pedantic; he sought to penetrate to the reason lying at the root of every ordinance, and to interpret that latter in its light. He spoke always with decision and independence, and his exposition of the Law was essentially rationalistic. But another and more important aspect appears in his mystical commentaries upon the haggadic writings. More and more as he grew older he was excused the ordinary duties of a rabbi in order that he might give his time to instructing his own especial group of disciples, to whom under an oath of secrecy he revealed many things. He knew, it was said, "all," more than any man since the days of Moses himself, and he was troubled by his responsibility on the one hand to pass on his knowledge, and on the other to prevent its falling into evil hands.

"Woe if I reveal!" he lamented, "woe if I do not reveal!" In the event he communicated much, but probably less than his full knowledge; the illumination of those who came after him seems to have been comparatively but partial. The writings he left to them, or which, more probably, they set down from their recollection of his teachings were at best fragmentary, and, though they supply one of the first attempts to state in writing the mysteries of man and the universe, much is lacking. Yet after his death his name was indissolubly connected with the mystic knowledge; and the works ascribed to him, and certainly, directly or otherwise, born of his proficiency, became a main authority for all Kabbalists. These works included many of the Zoharic treatises: *The Book of Concealment*, the first form in which the secret teaching of Simeon was written down; *The Greater Sacred Assembly*, which reports discourses to his disciples the gist of which is summed up in the sentence: "The Ancient of Ancients is in Microprosopus; all things are one; He was all things; He is all things; He will be all things; He shall know no change; He knoweth no change; He hath known no change"; *The Lesser Sacred Assembly* in which Simeon is sole speaker; and *The Faithful Shepherd* which records his conversations with Moses.

Their teachings are indeed essentially theosophical, from their immanent God beyond all possiblity of knowledge, their doctrine of emanations, their dualism dissolving at the ultimate point into an absolute monism, to their machinery—if the word may be allowed—of spheres, angels, and demiurges. They look backward and forward, and make all things one in their apprehension of the essential truth of all religions. Loyal Kabbalists would declare their wisdom to have been taught first by God (the Word, the Son, rather than the Silence, the Father) in paradise to a select company of the angels, who following the Fall communicated something of their knowledge to Man that by its means he might laboriously ascend again to recover his lost innocence. From Adam it came to Noah, from Noah to Abraham, who revealed it to the Egyptians, who first instructed Moses. But Moses also learnt much in the wilderness, and his later understanding was unparalleled in his day; he laid down for those to come after him the principles of his wisdom in the first four books of the pentateuch; he also initiated seventy of the elders, from whom knowledge passed down from teacher to teacher, none before Simeon daring to put it into writing. A more strictly "scientific" account would trace it back at least to the days of the Babylonian captivity. A wider view still might look even deeper into time and farther afield to see it as an offshoot of the ancient Wisdom Religion of Asia itself, a transparent garment for that truth which lies at

the hearts alike of Buddhist, Egyptian, Babylonian, Sanskrit, Zend, and Chinese writings. (The *Zohar* certainly contains truths known to the Hindus in remote ages, but only discovered by Western science of comparatively recent years.) In it the "partial illumination" originally accorded to Israel, was revivified and crystallised by the Alexandrian rebirth of mystical knowledge and discussion, carried freely from Egypt to Palestine by intimate Jewish connections.

The wisdom of Simeon was the sacred—and largely secret—possession of the Jewish teachers of mystic knowledge for many hundreds of years, being handed down from generation to generation as a still largely oral tradition known only to the initiated few who by long trial had proved themselves worthy, the actual rare manuscripts being added to ever and again as seemed desirable or necessary. Thus the existing Kabbalistic writings represent the accretions of the centuries upon an early basis, intruding into the original matter later borrowings from Hellenistic, Neo-Platonic, Stoic, Gnostic, Zoroastrian, and even Christian sources. As a result of the Crusades, the Jewish teachers, and their knowledge, were scattered wide over Europe. There is mention of a text entitled *The Mysteries of Simeon ben Yohai* in or before the eleventh century, but it was two hundred years later that a compilation of various manuscripts was produced by Moses de Leon, a rabbi of Guadalaxara in Spain, and circulated by him as the work of Simeon. It was almost immediately challenged as a forgery, but later study has confirmed its authentic nature. It was printed at Mantua in 1558 in the form in which it has come down to us to-day, and since then has never ceased to attract attention and to win an ever-deepening regard and influence in the wider world. It was, says Waite, perhaps the first of all books appearing in the West to state certainly "that God is altogether without mutation or vicissitude—that wrath and judgment are of man alone," that "the repayment of God is the compensation of everlasting justice".

So, in a very real sense, the illumination of the past falls upon the present. Egypt was long the immediate home of transcendent wisdom for the West, the most ancient centre outside Asia itself, but for a thousand years before Ptolemy it had been losing the essential keys of its understanding. The form, if not the essence, was becoming flawed and debased. Alexander, ambitious conqueror, laid the road open once more to India, but it was Ptolemy who established Alexandria as the meeting-place for seven hundred years of East and West, who by his Museum and Library made it a centre for the gathering and exchange of many wisdoms, and who in the conception of Serapis pointed once again to an eternal Truth masked by the many aspects of the multitudi-

nous gods. Had Ptolemy been other than the man he was, then Apollonius might still have penetrated to India, but without the light of Alexandrian learning and curiosity to shine over the whole Mediterranean civilisation the world of his youth and his age must have been strangely darkened and unresponsive, and the knowledge of Simon Magus, of Hillel and of Simeon becomes a thing if not incredible then strangely improbable. Each of these men paved the way, however indirectly, for those who came after him. They are links in a chain leading out from the labyrinth of an impressive past into a present grown strangely small even as foreground to its long vista. Beyond that—whither?

GEOFFREY WEST

This drama of the struggle of Prometheus with the Olympic tyrant and despot, sensual Zeus, one sees enacted daily within our actual mankind: the lower passions chain the higher aspirations to the rock of matter, to generate in many a case the vulture of sorrow, pain, and repentance. In every such case one sees once more

"A god . . . in fetters, anguish fraught;
The foe of Zeus, in hatred held by all . . ."

A god bereft even of that supreme consolation of Prometheus, who suffered in self-sacrifice—

"For that to men he bare too fond a mind . . ."

as the divine Titan is moved by altruism, but the mortal man by Selfishness and Egoism in every instance.

The modern Prometheus has now become *Epi-metheus*, "he who sees only after the event"; because the universal philanthropy of the former has long ago degenerated into selfishness and self-adoration. Man will become the *free* Titan of old, but not before cyclic evolution has re-established the broken harmony between the two natures—the terrestrial and the divine; after which he becomes impermeable to the lower titanic forces, invulnerable in his personality, and immortal in his individuality, which cannot happen before every animal element is eliminated from his nature. When man understands that "*Deus non fecit mortem* (*Sap. I.*, 13), but that man has created it himself, he will re-become the Prometheus before his Fall.

H. P. BLAVATSKY, *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. II, p. 422

THE EXPERIMENTAL ORIGIN OF KNOWLEDGE II

[**W. Wilson Leisenring, B.A.,** is the author of *The Real Earth, Too Small for Life*, etc. and at one time was associate-editor of *World Power*.—EDS.]

As a physiological organism there is no doubt that the human form is the acme of physical evolution; but even so it may be questioned whether the race as it is to-day utilizes all the potentialities of the human brain, that is, of the frontal lobes which the latest researches have definitely shown to be the organ of human volitional functions. Modern science knows nothing experimentally about 'free will' itself, although some men of science have attributed 'indeterminacy' or 'free-will' to certain states of radiation. But, as no other form has been found, on earth or in space, with a brain adapted to the conscious use of volition, it were, perhaps, wiser to investigate the supposed free-will of man himself before ascribing these higher human powers to entities of Nature. Only the automatic, reflective functions of the *animal* brain, the cerebellum, have been investigated in physio-psychological researches. The properties and powers of that portion (the cerebrum) through which function truly *human* characteristics have still to be explored by modern science.

Formerly, scientific authorities considered the human brain to be merely a highly developed animal organ, and human faculties to be *essentially* similar to animal senses. Consequently, no scientific importance was attached to discussions on mind and free-will; but researches have now compelled recognition of a fundamental distinction between the functions of the posterior and frontal cranial areas: and in all higher animal species the frontal area, the cerebrum, is merely rudimentary. This result of research is one of the most important confirmations of *The Secret Doctrine*, and suggests a cardinal factor in the origin of its knowledge.

Recently, also, palæontologists have been gradually coming to the conclusion that Man, the highest product of physical evolution, is not the latest; that he has existed on this planet for a much longer period than was believed possible according to the Darwinian theory. His earliest advent had been placed first in the late Quaternary Age; then in the earlier Quaternary; but in 1930 the conclusions of various workers, summed up in Professor Fairfield Osborn's "Dawn Man," were finally adopted officially, and the discovery of human forbears in tertiary strata "is likely to be a triumph of the 20th century".* Thus man—*homo sapiens*—the creature of thought and will is admitted to have existed on this earth for unknown millions of years. Most of

*. *Nature*, Jan. 11, 1930, p. 61.

the second volume of *The Secret Doctrine* is devoted to an exposition of the archaic statements regarding the antiquity of the human race, its origin and its triple, interdependent evolution——spiritual, psychic, and physical.

In view, therefore, of the antiquity of a type of physical man as perfect physiologically as any specimens now existing, it would seem impossible that his volitional powers could never have been understood at any prior period of human history. With his cranial dynamic organ at man's disposal one would think that at some time in the cycles of innumerable civilizations, ancient seekers of knowledge must have used their volitional powers more effectively than men do today. It is not improbable, too, that they may have reversed the sequence in the order of their experiments and have begun their researches in matter at the opposite extreme of density to that in which modern science inaugurated its investigations. In which case, their process of externalizing would have begun by objectifying thought itself or the mental energy-matter—the vibrating substance—in which man thinks. Were such a procedure possible the following considerations would have to be taken into account:—

1. If thought be characteristic of fields of space otherwise empty for physical science, it is clear that these states could not be objective to an observer functioning in the same state or level. He must change his 'position,' that is, reverse his poles and function above, beyond, or within them, in still deeper levels.

2. These states could not be correctly described except in terms of the perceptive organ that contacts them. If they are interpreted in terms of other organs of sense the *specialized* characteristics of these lower senses will be erroneously ascribed to those higher states.

3. If, as science has demonstrated, lower frequencies are the product of higher, the latter are the proximate cause of the former. Thus, the power of reproduction originates 'above' and is carried 'down' into concrete conditions. The laws, or the intelligence, of the higher will also be found in the lower, though exhibited differently according to the degree and kind of its differentiation from the elementary or primary state.

4. Consequently it would be possible for an investigator who began his researches at higher levels to discover the principle regulating or governing those states—a principle which would apply generally also to all below. He might then work down or outward experimentally, guided by the deductive method.

For the sake of argument, we may postulate two hypothetical scientific workers who begin their investigations from opposite directions, so to speak. One by concentrating his 'free-will' externalizes his thoughts about the physical, concrete world around him by planning and conducting

chemical and physical experiments. The other would use his will-power to externalize his thoughts as such in the level and therefore, at the instant, they occur. Both experimenters must learn, *first of all*, how to insulate the materials used in experiment from interference by extraneous influences. As the first worker probes deeper into matter he finds it more and more difficult to isolate his chemical materials, and at a certain point his experiments come to a standstill until a container is devised that can be emptied of the 'air' in the surrounding atmosphere. The vacuum tube had to be invented before the existence of ultra-violet rays of light became known. Probing farther and farther into electro-chemical matter, this worker finds his field of experiment invaded by apparently sporadic flashes of energy which jump in and out of the field from deeper depths of atomic spaces. High-power instruments are brought into use in an attempt to trace the paths of these miniature wanderers in space; but, in spite of more than ten years' research, they cannot be identified individually, nor their individual cycles calculated. Apparently they are unregulated by inexorable cyclic law; apparently each comes and goes fancy-free and appears on our screen of time at will. The worker is nonplussed. He pauses to ask: Is it, then, impossible to isolate these 'atoms' or 'quanta' and control their appearance? Are they an energy undetermined by prior physical causes? If so, they must surely be the product of free-will and merely convey *thought* impulse. Can man discover the secret of their freedom?

The other worker should be able to answer these questions if he has accomplished the feat hypothetically assigned to him, and has objectified his own thoughts and emotions, and has insulated his consciousness from invasion by any other thoughts, ideas or desires. The first worker's attitude towards the new phenomena is *negative*. The other worker must have become *positive* in relation to the phenomena he is investigating; he must have 'reversed his poles' and have centred his consciousness farther within his field of thought if he has succeeded in externalizing or visualizing the substance of his thoughts: he must consciously use and control the energy that produces the forms of thought. It is obvious that the laboratory of such experiments must be the experimenter's own organism. Hence there must be organs in the brain capable of sensing, or responding to, ultra-physical levels of light and of *polarizing these at will*. The considerations given above in the four numbered paragraphs indicate that the functioning of these organs, if under rigorous control, should enable the worker to learn how ultra-physical energies reproduce or reflect themselves in molecular states; how structures are built up in lower frequencies; how inner states of

tension expand outwardly and finally exhibit 'surface tension' in viscous substances and electromagnetic cohesion in concrete matter.

Were a method of research possible such as is very vaguely suggested above, our two hypothetical workers would be within hailing distance to-day and a meeting imminent. And, as they approach one another from opposite directions, the one who is 'descending' should be able to predict the outcome of the researches of him who is 'ascending' —even to foretelling, perhaps, the predicament in which he now finds himself. But he will not be understood until the distance between them permits of intelligible communication.

That which in the *Secret Doctrine* is referred to as the unmanifested planes, are unmanifested or planes of non-being only from the point of view of the finite intellect; ... (*Transactions of Blavatsky Lodge*, p. 111)

There are seven states of matter of which three are generally known, viz. solid, liquid, and gaseous. (*Ib.* p. 101) [Since then a fourth state, electromagnetic radiation, has become known.] ...

H. P. Blavatsky claimed that she had obtained her knowledge by an experimental training different from the usual scientific method, and that she had been taught by research workers, unknown to the world in general, who were versed in an arcane scientific procedure handed down through generations of those trained in this method. Some of these men had studied, also, in Western universities and were acquainted with the progress, methods and outlook of Western science. Comparing the results so far obtained in the West with their own knowledge, they foresaw that the investigations of imminent scientists would soon come within range of certain of the rarer states of matter with which they themselves were familiar. They foresaw the *impasse* and the inevitable reaction to abortive speculation and anthropomorphism. Madame Blavatsky was, therefore, commissioned and assisted to give to the intellectual classes some of the findings of arcane science.

The above may be considered far-fetched, but it illustrates one aspect of the universal law of cyclic evolution which H. P. Blavatsky unearthed from archaic records. Both physics and chemistry now endorse the conception that involution and evolution are complementary principles operating in the physical world; and from the depths of Space come rays that by interaction recreate and sustain physical matter.

Again, history records that pioneers from older, civilized races stimulate the evolution of less matured races; and, from the consciousness of highly developed geniuses comes an impact on the minds of thinking men that eventually differentiates one era from another. Interaction between the 'high' and the 'low,' between elementary and highly organized states, seems to be a law of existence and an essential condition for evolution and progress.

W. Wilson Leisenring

MYSTICISM OF THE DRUSES

[**Syed A. Rafique** is a Muslim who graduated with honours in Philosophy at Cambridge and is now a resident in England.—EDS.]

There comes a stage when by concentration and meditation, one is released from the trammels of the sensuous world and achieves an esoteric understanding of the universe. So have held the great mystics of the world belonging to what are *apparently* diametrically opposed religions and philosophies.

In a materialistic civilization when the *combat* with nature (foolish at times) has dulled the higher intuitive powers, such things may, and do, appear as vapourings of an unbalanced mind. The unscientific scientist of the modern age is so blinded by the glare of the sense world that he cannot penetrate beyond his hidebound realm, based as it is merely on observation and induction. But in countries where the intimacy with the marvellous has obtained for centuries, it is impossible to ignore these phenomena however great an attempt is made at rationalization.

With a religion that translates itself wholly into outward behaviour, achievement of a contemplative esoteric unity with followers of other religions is difficult if not impossible. But where the higher meditative plane can be reached, Mohammedans, Christians, Buddhists and Nature-Worshippers all can enter into a holy communion. That is what Madame Blavatsky in her chapter on Syrian secret societies (*Isis Unveiled*, Vol. II, p. 289 *et seq*) and especially in her account of the 'Druzes' has held and rightly so.

It must be confessed that the evidences of similarity of teaching of the mystic of every age, be he a Neo-Platonist, Pythagorean, or Buddhist, is too forceful to be brushed aside with contumely. We have to allow that mystics of all creeds have a kind of freemasonry amongst them. Professor E. G. Browne has sought to deny the influence of Buddhistic philosophy on Muslim Sufis. But then he stands against both Dozy and von Kremmer. Trumpp in fact explicitly states that Sufism is not only an Indian product "but still nearer to Buddhistic notions". Of the four secret sects of Syria, Nosairi's, Ismaili's, Metawali's and the Druses, the last mentioned are the most interesting.

Much speculation about their secret meetings have been made and volumes published which, as Madame Blavatsky points out, are mere conglomerations of hypotheses. This charge that she levels against de Sacy's pretentious book *Expose de la Religion des Druses* applies equally to the Muslim westernized savant the Rt. Hon. Syed Amir Ali.

The Druses are essentially an

esoteric cult. Their God is quite like Böehme's unpredicatable and unknowable. And He is capable of incarnating Himself into a human being. This they believe happened in the person of Ali, and of Hakim, the sixth Fatimite Caliph of Egypt (A. D. 996). Hamza, his lieutenant, was the Universal Wisdom, Christos or Messiah.

The Druses divide their people into three groups:

(1) the Juhhals, or the ignorants and uninitiated;
(2) the Akkils, or the wise and initiated;
(3) the Ajawids, or the principals.

Madame Blavatsky's information from an initiate merits a special attention. It is apparently an impartial account of the ceremony of initiation, which, to the outside world, is a complete mystery. It would appear from the testimony of Professor Rawson that though the Druses are Nature Worshippers the calumnies against them should be discounted.

The Druses are not only connected with the Batimi's of the Shiah sect who interpret scriptures by allegory but are also influenced by Kabbalistic and Pythagorean doctrines of Numbers which Plato also took over during his later period. The number seven is the magical number. Further, they also repudiate heaven and hell and take up the transmigration of soul and the absorption of the finite spirit into the Infinite akin to Buddhists' Nirvana.

They are courageous people and their Akkils have a strict course of probation. Their women join in their worship though separated by a transparent screen; and they can attain the highest order. The doctrine of Takkiya or the profession of a faith merely outwardly is partly due to the persecution inflicted on these people and partly to their notion of tolerance. Outward behaviour being unimportant, it is better than not to live peaceably with the society. Perhaps for the same reason they do not seek proselytes. The very important meetings held in complete seclusion and great secrecy and attended by the highest of the order are said to be visited by Hamza himself. The common charge of licentiousness against all mystics of every age is levelled against them as well but there is really no proof; for in practice the Druses are found just as trustworthy as followers of any other faith. Their seven tablets have nothing which could be made the object of derision being only some simple and wholesome rules.

The most important settlement is at Mount Hauran in Syria, and since the Turkish persecution it has grown more populous. The Druses believe that Hakim will one day come out of his hidden place and will establish the Kingdom of God. With this buoyant vision before them their life is full of hope and expectancy.

SYED A. RAFIQUE

NEW BOOKS AND OLD

PHILOSOPHY AND MYSTICISM*

[**J. D. Beresford's** criticisms prompt us to refer our readers to the Theosophical view of the circle of evolution described by H. P. Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine* I, p. 17, half of which is traced by "Natural Impulse" resulting in the birth of self-conscious individuality and the remaining, by its "self-induced and self-devised efforts, checked by its Karma".—EDS.]

It is nearly a quarter of a century since Bergson's most impressive work, "Creative Evolution," was first published and in the interval he has suffered the experience, *inter alia*, of living through the years of the War. That his philosophy was, in some sense, disturbed by this world crisis is evident in the present work, although he tells us that the first news came to him with a strange sense of completing the expectation put into his mind in 1871, at a time when France was whispering to herself that this was not the end, and that presently the hour would strike for the great "Revanche".

Nevertheless the Bergson of seventy exhibits the same mentality, the same ability to trace out the intricate spirals of logical reasoning that won for him as early as 1889 a place among the more considerable philosophers of his own time, a place that was, from one point of view finally confirmed by the award of the Nobel Prize for Literature forty years later. He is still an intellectual, desiring in his own words "rester aussi près que possible des faits"; and in this closely reasoned analysis that he has made of the two sources of Morality and Religion, we see him clutching, a little desperately now and again, to the skirts of the theory, in which he posited his Elan Vital as the instrument of an anonymous Creator.

His main distinction in the opening chapters of the present work is based upon his own postulates of the "open" and the "closed," the first kind of order being that of "the *vital* or the *willed*, in opposition to the second which is that of the *inert* and the *automatic*".† With this criterion he examines firstly the sources of morality, comparatively easy ground, and distinguishes between the "morality" of the insect world, as illustrated by the closed system obtaining in the hive or the formicary, and the open one which in man is the outcome of intelligence. The former he describes as practically somnambulistic. The latter arises in the world of

* *Les Deux Sources de la Morale et de la Religion* par Henri Bergson. (Librairie Felix Alcan) 25 francs.

† *Creative Evolution*, English translation. By ARTHUR MITCHELL. London, 1911.

humanity from the influence of reason. "One has been willed by nature, the other is an 'apport' of human genius. One is characterised by a totality of habits which in man has a symmetrical correspondence to the instincts of the animal and is less than intelligence. The other manifests aspiration, intuition and emotion," —the human "apport,"—and is greater than intelligence. (p. 62).

This is an exceedingly promising opening. It assumes the doctrine of "holism," (the "tendency in nature to join wholes that are more than the sum of the parts, by creative evolution"), and leaves an opening for almost any of the assumptions of an idealist as opposed to a merely vitalist philosophy. But M. Bergson, though he is so obviously aware of his dilemma, is somewhat over eager to keep a foot in either camp. So long as he is dealing with the development of moral obligation, of the development on pragmatical grounds of the duty to our neighbour through the instrumentality of intelligence, which connotes a measure of prescience or at least of reasonable anticipation,—he goes bravely forward, lucid, logical and graphic as he has always been. It is when he comes to the human "apport," the unevaluated factor in holism, as an element in religion that he begins to hesitate, to prevaricate, finally refusing to commit himself to any statement that might brand him as a mystic rather than as a metaphysician.

We come to this by way of his analysis of religion and four italicised deductions. The first of these, on page 127 is that "religion is nature's defensive reaction against the solvent power of intelligence". The second (page 137), that from a second point of view, "religion is nature's defensive reaction against the presentation by intelligence of the inevitability of death". The third (page 147) asserts that "religion's representations of death are nature's defensive reactions against the representation by the intelligence of a discouraging, unforeseen latitude between the initiative taken and the effect desired". The fourth (p. 219) that, assuming the earlier deductions, "religion is nature's defensive reaction against whatever there might be in the exercise of intelligence that would depress the individual and break up society". To which it must be added before we proceed with our examination that the "religion" as here defined is classified as "static," some form of primitive religion, or of that closed, wholly or in part by the dogma necessary to confine the teachings of a particular sect, this type being opposed to the "dynamic" religion exhibited in mysticism.

There are further qualifications and contingents in this connection, but the general purpose of these deductions is quite clear. They are put forward in defence of the general argument for creative evolution, and designed to fill an uncomfortable hiatus. On the other side it has been held

that the religious sense appearing in primitive man,—and M. Bergson here posits that "there has never been a society without a religion"—appears to serve no purpose either protective or developmental from an evolutionary point of view, and by extension this reasoning has been made a ground for the claim that there has been a spiritual evolution of quite another order from the physical or the intellectual.*

M. Bergson now meets this contention by positing a "defensive reaction in nature," not, so far as we gather, working with a conscious purpose but meeting and overcoming situations as they arise by the energy of its vital thrust into being. And we are asked to believe, therefore—though the example is not cited by M. Bergson,—that Totemism is an instance of nature's "reaction" against the dawning intelligence, a development that by the exercise of reason and the foresight of death might "depress the individual and break up his social tendencies". But surely this is to assume an "apport" in the working of the Elan Vital which is hardly consistent with the premises? Is it at all credible that this device,—for indeed it is far more like a device than a reaction,— is in any way representative of, or consistent with, the working of Creative Evolution as the author expounds it in his earlier treatise and in the work now under consideration? Is there *a fortiori*, any shadow of evidence outside the philosopher's own mind, to show how this "defensive reaction" first manifested itself as a protection against that "solvent power of intelligence" which threatened to bar the expression of the life-force?

Nor does it help us to consider this problem in the light of an imaginative flight made by M. Bergson in a later chapter. After letting his mind speculate for a moment on the possibility that in other corners of the universe, the "creative energy of love" may work more freely, he says that "everything tends to show that in this world the matter which is complementary to life, was little designed to favour the *élan*. The original impulse has therefore brought about divergent evolutionary progressions, instead of being maintained undivided up to the goal" (p. 275). Are we then to assume, perhaps that the greater resistance of this world's gross matter has sharpened the wits—if the phrase be not irreverent?—of the "creative energy of love," to the point of developing those dogmatic, static religions as a temporary expedient to save humanity and society until it were sufficiently far advanced to prove receptive to the higher impulse?

To us, it must be confessed, the whole argument so far as it is designed to save the conception of the Elan Vital from the attribution to it of conscious, reasoning purpose in this connection, has an uncomfortable effect of evading a difficulty by endowing "nature"

* See *The Evolution of Religion* in the September number of THE ARYAN PATH.

with reactions which have all the air of deliberate reason. May it not be suggested, in fact, that these reactions of "nature" correspond far too nearly to the predetermined plan of a creator ?

But we must leave this explanation of the birth of " static " religions and come to the consideration of the dynamic where, indeed, we find M. Bergson more perplexed than ever in his approach to the subject of mysticism.

He begins by ranging himself in this connection, with William James whom he quotes (p. 263) as declaring that he had had no mystical experience, but that when he spoke with a man who had had such experience something within him responded. (quelque-chose en lui faisait éche). From this he proceeds to grant a certain validity to the records of the mystics, as being in accord one with another, but makes it clear that he recognises but one true order of mysticism, namely the Christian. After a consideration of Eastern mysticism he dismisses the creed of the Buddha as not being a complete mysticism, which would be that of " action, creation, love". Buddhism, he says, (p. 241) has not ignored love, but it has lacked warmth, has not believed in the efficacy of human action, had no confidence in itself ; and he finds this ardent love, "a mysticism comparable to the Christian," only in such comparatively, post-Christian examples as a Vivekananda or a Ramakrishna. He concludes (p. 242) by saying that "neither in Greece nor in ancient India has there been a complete mysticism sometimes because the *élan* was insufficient, sometimes because it was opposed by material circumstances or a too narrow intellectualism.

The definition of the true mysticism, too long to be quoted here, follows on pp. 250–1. This definition covers most essentials and is finally identified with the "*élan* itself, communicated in its integrity to some privileged men who then desire to impress it on the whole of humanity and, paradoxically, by a creative effort change this created thing that is a type of itself, move that which is by definition, in arrest". But will it succeed, he continues, amongst humanity "that species of animal, ruled by the animal law which condemns life to feed on life"; and the answer to that is a doubtful one. M. Bergson, indeed, demands as the condition of such success a drastic change in the world order, a raising of the level of intelligence, and liberation from machinery. He sees in conclusion "humanity trembling, half crushed by the weight of the progress it has made". "It does not sufficiently realise," he writes "that its future depends upon itself. It is for humanity to ask itself if it only wishes to live, or, beyond that to furnish the necessary effort in the accomplishment on this refractory planet, of the essential function of the universe, which is a machine to make gods".

This, very briefly, is M. Bergson's exposition of the two sources of Morality and Religion.

The first source is the pressure exercised by society, the necessity for men and women who live in close relation to one another, of formulating that law of self-protection, which according to Nietzsche is the single origin of dogmatic religion. But with his examination of the second source, M. Bergson, as we have seen, goes a step further and postulates the probability of a further inspiration coming in effect from outside, and working through those rare responsive individuals (les âmes qui s'ouvrent), whom we know as the mystics.

And with much of this we can very willingly agree. M. Bergson has intimated hesitatingly, at times almost reluctantly, an approach to those truths which constitute the familiar knowledge of the Ancient Wisdom. He has shown himself in this as in his earlier works, a philosopher who has refused to be confined by tradition and scholarship in that closed circle to which he makes such frequent reference in the present work. He has, it is true, no message to give to the readers of THE ARYAN PATH, but it is interesting and instructive to find a philosopher of his type, arriving by a devious and painstaking route at the verge of those conclusions which formulate our own premises. If he has been unable to go still further, to reach the full realisation of the true meaning of the inexplicable, and in some cases self-contradictory, attributes of his own Elan Vital, we may attribute the failure, in his own words, to "les circumstances naturelles" and an "intellectualité trop étroite".

J. D. BERESFORD

MUSLIM ESOTERICISM*

[**Hugh I'A. Fausset** writes with understanding and impartiality on Islamic Mysticism and offers some thoughts of practical value in the present state of tension between Hindus and Muslims.—EDS.]

The seven essays contained in this book were originally published in a limited edition thirty years ago and their re-issue is to be welcomed because they deal primarily with a side of Muhammadanism which has received too little attention, at least in the West, namely its mystical side. 'Tasawwuf,' the Islamic name for the ecstatic state, is a subject, as Mr. Khan remarks, 'that people fear to teach from a public platform'. And this fear is very reasonable and right. For the nearer we approach to the heart of the religious experience, the less are we inclined to talk about it, to preach or to proselytize. 'The bee buzzes,' it has been said, 'when it is

* *The Philosophy of Islam.* By Khan Sahib KHAJA KHAN. B. A. (The Hogarth Press, Madras. 2*s*. 6*d*.)

outside the flower, but within the chalice, it drinks honey silently'. And those who have come nearest to reality, who have realized it within their being, know that the secret of it cannot be proclaimed from the pulpit. An intimacy of personal contact is required for its communication and often it is not so much through words as through the subtle pulsations of a living presence, the direct infusion of a spirit that is at one with all Spirit, that the liberating light of truth is transmitted to those who are ripe for responding to it. Mr. Khan who quotes the Islamic saying—'He who understood God has his tongue tied'—is well aware of this, but he admits that the duty of some liberated men may well be to guide their 'straying brethren'. And I would go further than he does and suggest that the time has come when much of the esoteric knowledge, so closely and jealously guarded in the past, may be made public. Readers of THE ARYAN PATH need not be reminded that Madame Blavatsky was a pioneer in this difficult and necessary work, and there is no reason to believe that the effects of her research have been anything but beneficial. Not that I would underestimate the dangers of broadcasting the details of occult practices. But so much half-knowledge of the subject is already prevalent that pseudo-science can now only be corrected by true science. Even now the deepest and most potent knowledge cannot be entrusted to any who have not advanced so far along the path of their purification as to be incapable of abusing it. But since occultism is no more and no less than the science of supra-physical, and since the quest of man for knowledge has now reached the point when the physical world is dissolving into something immaterial, his advance into subtler regions of the Spirit cannot obviously be arrested. Knowledge is in fact always dangerous; it may lead to the greatest good or the greatest harm, as the history of the development of natural science in the West during the last hundred years so lamentably shows. But it is man's destiny to *know*, in order that he may more truly *be*. Again it is his destiny to *be* that he may more truly *know*. And it cannot be emphasized too strongly that the latter condition governs unalterably the profitable pursuit of occult science. Only the mystic, the man who is striving courageously and consistently after selflessness and the deepening and transformation of the inner life, can afford to study, still more to practise the occult. But for such a man it may prove as valuable and necessary a science of the soul, as the science of the body is for the man who would cultivate physical health.

But the digression into which I have been led has taken me rather far from Mr. Khan who disclaims in his preface any intention of discussing the inner nature or mechanism of the mystical state. His predominant purpose, in his own words, ' is to show in the man-

ner of Euclid's point what Tasawwuf is not, rather than what it is' and particularly to refute 'certain nebulous ideas of Tasawwuf which are nothing more than Vedantic doctrines and Grecian aphorisms'. Since the very word Tasawwuf did not come into existence till about the end of the second century of the Hejira, and since an unwritten law, which permits the Sufi writers to quote hadithes without citing chapter and verse, has resulted in many spurious hadithes being incorporated into Tasawwuf, the task he has set himself of purifying Islamic doctrine of foreign and dubious additions is no easy one. Nor is it a task which can interest greatly any but the devout Musalman or those who are making a special study of Islam. At times, indeed his essays are so overburdened with interpretation of specific words and phrases as to become little more than a glossary of Islamic terms, while in his analysis of rival schools of thought and doctrine he is necessarily concerned with that aspect of religion which for the reader who has freed himself from the fetters of organized creeds is the least edifying, even if such a one admits that crucial matters of belief underlay what are often quibbling differences.

But Mr. Khan is a convinced Muhammadan, who applauds the rhetorical question addressed by Sir Saiyid Ahmad to the students of the Aligarh College,—"What is it to us, if you become the stars of heaven, when you have shaken off Islam ?" His chief purpose is therefore to restore and purify the faith of his fathers and recall to it those young Muhammadans who are lapsing from its stricter rule. But he is not forgetful too of a wider audience. Hence he has 'tried to show in some places that Islamic doctrines and practices, if probed deeply, would be found to have the support of the best and most earnest thinkers of the West.' He is of course perfectly secure in making this claim. But it might be made with equal justice of each of the historical religions of mankind. In all of them, if we probe deeply enough, we find the same mysteries revealed, the same rules of conduct prescribed, the same path of salvation sought. But in Muhammadanism, as in Christianity, these profound and constant truths are overlaid, if not perverted, by exclusive claims and dogmas which 'the best and most earnest thinkers' of to-day cannot for a moment accept even if they admit that a symbolic significance can be read into the contested facts. I need only cite two passages from Mr. Khan's exposition of his Faith to show what I mean. 'It is claimed,' he writes, 'that perfect evolution from plurality to unity was gained by one only, the most perfect representative, the "perfect man" as he is called, *viz.*, Muhammad the Prophet.' And again: 'The Prophet had concentrated in him all the attributes that inhere in the choicest individuals of the human race.'

Certainly Muhammad must always rank high in the hierarchy of inspired prophets and religious reformers, but there can be few who have studied his life and personality disinterestedly who will not consider such claims as the above to be idolatry. That Christians make even more exalted claims for Jesus of Nazareth is of course equally true. But their idolatry has at least the justification of a life, so far as we know it, of unexampled purity and blamelessness. While, therefore, it is possible to sympathise with Mr. Khan's determination to admit as genuine in Islamic philosophy only such thoughts and doctrines as can be traced to its founder, his insistence that the Prophet was the only 'Perfect Man,' the one centre in which Divinity and humanity met, reflects that combative and exclusive stage in the development of religious consciousness which humanity, we may well hope, has almost outgrown.

A sectarian prejudice is also evident in various acrimonious references which he makes to Hinduism and Buddhism. For example he writes,—'In Hinduism you stand at the threshold and get a sideway glimpse from afar of a Divinity that appears to be impersonal. In Buddhism after travelling long and uphill, you lift the veil; and the eyes are so dazzled that you behold a nullity—a mere zero. In Islam you have a personal God, a God that possesses all the attributes of perfection and is devoid of all the attributes of imperfection.' And elsewhere he refers disparagingly to 'the Nihilistic philosophy of Buddha and Sankara'.

To any one who has studied the Vedanta or the teaching of Buddha closely, such sentences as these must seem little better than caricatures of the spiritual wisdom which they reveal. And Mr. Khan's prejudice would seem to be traceable not only to that rather crude monotheism which was the very dynamic of early Muhammadanism in its conflict with a prevalent polytheism, but to the fact that it derived much of its later and more subtle mystical knowledge from the Hindus. To quote his own words, 'When the Muslims travelled Eastward and settled in India, their philosophical belief received a good deal of accretions from the Vedanta School. 'It is these accretions which he is most anxious to purge away. Yet his description of many of the mystical tenets of Sufism shows that they correspond closely to the purest doctrine of Vedanta, and I would be more convinced by his claim that they are indigenous, if he did not so grossly distort the religions which he wishes to disown. I have not space here to discuss the vexed question of monotheism and pantheism, but merely to dismiss Hinduism as pantheistic without any real understanding of what spiritual pantheism involves is an unjust and high-handed proceeding. Mr. Khan contrasts the Muhammadan and the Hindu view of the divine immanence in

the following sentence,—'In the one travel to God appears a mode of motion in knowledge from the coarse material to spiritual contemplation, when a tajalli or illumination of God appears in the Salik; while in the other it is an incarnation of God—God himself appearing in flesh for the salvation of humanity'. But more shortly his contention is that the Musalman believes that he can attain to be one with God, the Hindu that he can become God. Yet no informed student of the Upanishads would admit so crude a contrast. For if the essential identity of Atman and Brahman is the central theme of the Upanishads, it is balanced no less emphatically by a realization that God, in Professor Radhakrishnan's words, 'is greater than the Universe, which is His work. He is as much and more beyond this, as the human personality is beyond the body, which is the instrument of its life here'. Deity, in short, is transcendent as well as immanent. It exceeds the ability of even the purest soul to realize It completely.

I cannot help feeling that such a conception of God escapes the dangers of pantheism quite as successfully as that of the strict Muhammadan does and without falling, as the latter, judged by Mr. Khan would seem to do, into the personal prejudice and limitations of an anxious and suspicious monotheism. Although in fact Khan's essays are valuable in showing how much unexpected mysticism and esoteric meaning are to be found in Islam, the impression remains that its real genius is of a practical and moral nature, closely akin to Judaism. It is not without significance that the annual compulsory pilgrimage to Mecca was not instituted wholly for spiritual ends. As Mr. Khan can proudly claim,—'It practically teaches the benefits of travelling and trading, for unlike the Hindu pilgrim the Muslim pilgrim is permitted to traffic'. Like all great religions Islam teaches, of course, submission to the will of God and ultimate extinction of one's will in His will, but for it that consummation so devoutly to be wished for is to be attained primarily by direct and forthright methods. Conceived as the religion of an active, hot-blooded, and war-like methods, it has preserved its strength and simplicity at the cost of subtler spiritual wisdom. Its personal God has reflected the intrepid and aggressive personalities who bowed down daily before Him. It has been on the whole hostile to asceticism and speculations because its devotees have lived so ardently the life of the body and have been so conscious of and ready to meet the demands of the physical world. Yet its this-worldliness has been rooted in a passionate conviction of the unity of God and of the necessity of 'burning one's self before the One'. And this fundamental and interior mysticism as Mr. Khan shows, has been developed and refined by many sensitive spirits among the later followers of the Prophet,

who have crystallized it in a body of esoteric knowledge comparable in value to that of the other religions of the East. Mr. Khan's essays are to be welcomed because they emphasise this frequently overlooked fact, but they would be more illuminating if he had been more ready to discover the spiritual truths which Muhammadanism shares with Hinduism and Buddhism instead of contrasting the virtues of his own Faith with the vices of other Faiths which he imperfectly understands.

HUGH I'A. FAUSSET

The Keys of Power—A Study of Indian Ritual and Belief. By J. ABBOTT, I. C. S. With numerous diagrams. (Methuen & Co. 21*s.*)

With an insight, sympathetic understanding, scrupulously selected and stated detail, Mr. J. Abbott has prepared surely for the purpose of consumption by a Western audience of readers an account of the various rituals performed by Hindus and Mohamedans from season to season. These owe their origin to a congenital belief that affairs of life and death, adjustment to the conditions of existence in a given life and to anticipations of future, and a general regulation of behaviour are firmly grounded on the dominance of the physical by the superphysical, and that objects are endowed with a peculiar power (*Sakti*) for good or evil. Hindus and Mohamedans believe in the existence and active operation of this mysterious power and model their daily religious and spiritual conduct so as to enlist the power for good in their services and avoid the power for evil. An orthodox Hindu unsophisticated by critical rationalism has to cover a programme of rituals commencing from sunrise and ending with sunset. There is a daily programme to be gone through (*Nitya-Karma*) and on special occasions elaborate special rituals have to be performed (*Naimittika-karma*). Birth, and Death, Wedding, Eclipses, New Moon, Full Moon, etc., reveal rituals that are concomitant with them. There is no unbridgeable gulf between the physical and the superphysical, between the finite and the Infinite; in virtue of the Immanence of the Spirit, the natural, or the finite creation is endowed with a peculiar power for good or evil, and it is held that a carefully performed ritual is just a key which would unlock massive doors and release power.

Thus Mr. Abbott deals with the Powers of Animals and Trees, of Man, and Woman; of Evil Eye, Water, Fire, Ground, Metals, Salt; of Stones, Time, Colours, Numbers, Sweet Things, Grain, Bread, etc., in different chapters. While it is obviously impossible to emphasise the many details of Hindu and Mohamedan rituals referred to by Mr. Abbott it is necessary to draw the attention of your readers to a few samples. (1) "A man's innate power is greatest when his shadow is longest" . . . Smell and saliva, shadow, nails, hair, are concerned with power. It is some consolation to learn that "A madman may actually be saint, if not a saint he is possessed by spirits . . ." (2) "A woman when *enceinte* has special power." (3) "Water keeps away spirits. . . . .Water is used in many ways in the strict ritual of bestowing a gift." The festivals of Holi and Deepavali are described. The power of Time is indeed tremendous and fractions of a Day, Days, Months, etc., are not neutral and colourless but are either auspicious or inauspicious. "The New Moon day is *ghoro* to the Muhammadan and a *parvakal* to the Hindu." "One is an ominous number. Two is associated

with *barkat*, etc." "Trees are often the abode of spirits." "Particular spirits and ghosts haunt particular trees." "A Muhammadan considers a donkey an accursed animal. . . . ." "If a pregnant woman sees asses mating, her children will be born strong." "According to both Muhammadan and Hindu belief, spirits are a creation apart . . . . Spirits propagate and are very fertile. . . . . Spirits bring evil to man." In the concluding chapter, Mr. Abbott enumerates certain factors that involve or bring about destruction of power. Appendix A contains a list of Hindu and Mohamedan charms.

Ex pede Herculem. The fact is obvious that Mr. Abbott has taken considerable pains to collect the minute details of Hindu and Mohamedan rituals, and presented them in a systematic manner. On the whole Mr. Abbott's command of the rather intricate Sanskrit terminology is indeed very commendable but here and there are inaccuracies which only demonstrate the difficulty of the Hindu ritualistic and linguistic details being mastered by a foreigner however sympathetic and however patient he may be; thus: (1) On page 187, line 2, from the bottom, the correct term used should have been "Adharani" and not as actually printed. (2) On page 47, what Mr. Abbott describes to be "Navrasinam" should as a matter of fact be taken to be "Nakshatra-nama", as the names are modelled on constellations and *not* on zodiacal signs. (3) On page 4, the term "Prithivipata" in the first line is wrong. It should be "Prithivipatih". (4) Mr. Abbott writes that the "God Sankara is supposed to have killed a demon called "*Tripurari*" (italics mine, Page 203, last line) but unfortunately, the term "Tripurari" is applied to Sankara the God and not to the demon. The demon is known as "Tripura" or "Tripurasura". (5) On page 349, the Sanskrit expression in the 8th line as it stands is inaccurate. It should read thus—"Vastram or vastrani samarpayami". (6) And again on page 466, line 20, when Mr. Abbott renders the expression "Mantradhinam tu Daivatam" into the "mantras *are* gods." (italics mine) he is clearly mistaken. The correct rendering would be "Gods are under the power of or subservient to Mantras".

It is an undeniable fact that the life of a Hindu is concerned with a number of rituals, and for their correct and accurate portraiture Mr. Abbott deserves the thanks of all interested in bringing about a better understanding between the East and the West in general and in particular of those interested in anthropological investigations. It would however be a terrible mistake to believe that the rituals *dominate* in any vital sense the life and conduct of modern Hindus with or without the benefits of English education. Gautama in his "Dharma Sutras" (Chapter 8) makes it perfectly clear that a Hindu has to go through a programme of forty rituals, (chatvarimsat-samskara) but, the rituals by themselves, however faultlessly performed, are unable to guarantee the riddance of ills that flesh and spirit are heir to. A well regulated and disciplined life lived according to the canons and standards of moral sensibility the mainspring of which is the spirit of service and sacrifice grounded on disinterested love, (Gautama seeks to sum up the moral requirements under the highly suggestive term "Atma-Guna,") is bound to rank higher any day in any scheme of rational evaluation. That is Gautama's position. When confronted with a moral situation involving a conflict between the rituals, (samskaras) and moral qualities, (atma-gunas) a rational and responsible subject will have absolutely no difficulty in showing rituals their proper place and rejecting their claims.

I am not quite sure if Mr. Abbott holds the view that the life of an average Hindu was ever pre-eminently ritual-ridden or continues to be so ritual-ridden even at the present day; but the fact should never be lost sight of that rituals are always subordinated to higher moral values. It is psychologically easy to look askance at rituals and ritualism, but, having rejected religious rituals, the

modern civilised nations have taken with gusto to a scheme of secular ritualism under cover of rationalism! Bureaucratic red-tapism, political and commercial exploitation, competition and victimisation are all manifestations of secular ritualism. If Mr. Abbott has no quarrel with the latter he could have none either with the scheme of Indian ritual and belief. I feel convinced that Mr. Abbott's excellent volume is bound to satisfy an anthropological need. He has done his work so well that readers and reviewers would feel that it could hardly have fallen into better hands.

R. NAGA RAJA SARMA

The Number Key to Ancient Wisdom. A Handbook Expository of the Principles of the Astronomical Wisdom-Doctrine in Greek and Hebrew Cryptography. By J. W. T. CARRINGTON. (Houghton Publishing Co., London. 5*s*.)

Mr. Carrington sets out to show that

> by the method detailed in this handbook, there will be disclosed as attaching to letter combinations in the Hebrew and Greek alphabets significances so mutually harmonious as to outline a system of transcendental philosophy that is consistent as well as profound.

This very ambitious aim is not realised.

The application of Kabalistic methods of interpretation to the Hebrew scriptures is an extremely controversial question. That meanings were sometimes deliberately concealed from the uninitiated by means of ciphers based on the numerical values of Hebrew words seems to be certain; but the extent to which this was done was probably more limited than is usually claimed, and many of the examples given in such works as Macgregor Mathers' *Kabbalah Unveiled* are singularly unconvincing.

Whether numerical ciphers were used in Greek, in which language as in Hebrew each letter stands for a number, has been disputed. Dr. Wynn Westcott, in his book on *Numbers*, appears to think not. He speaks of the "bastard Greek Kabalah" formed in the Middle Ages on the Hebrew model. On the other hand, Mr. James M. Pryse, in his *Apocalypse Unsealed*, has adduced some very striking instances of the use of a numerical cipher in that work; and it seems probable that Jewish writers, like the author of the *Apocalypse*, did occasionally adapt the methods of the Kabalah to Greek when writing in that language.

Mr. Carrington lays down certain rules for the numerical analysis of Greek and Hebrew words; but he does not tell us where they come from or why we should accept them as valid. His leading principle is that "the significance of a number is the combination of the separate significances . . . . of the several factors of the number . . "

This would seem to be a novel principle in Kabalistic exegesis and to be quite distinct from either of the well-known methods called respectively Gematria, Notaricon and Temura.

The greater part of the present work is devoted to an account of the significances which Mr. Carrington thinks should be attributed to various numbers. Some of these are traditional and interesting; but the majority appear to be entirely arbitrary and without point. Such information, for example, as that 181 is the numerical value of *eirene* (peace), in Greek; 182, of the name, Jacob, in Hebrew; 195, the "total of the stripes received by St. Paul"; and the like, is scarcely worth recording in print.

It would be easier to follow Mr. Carrington's thought if he would simplify his terribly involved style and curb his tendency to coin awkward and unnecessary words.

R. A. V. M.

Man and Technics. By OSWALD SPENGLER. (Allen & Unwin. 6*s.*)

Technics, according to Spengler, is not to be understood in terms of implements. It signifies the whole tactics of living, and includes all methods, of whatsoever kind, employed by life in its conflict with Nature.

Technics, therefore, is coeval with life. However, among plants, life is only a theatre for the activities of the sun and light. It is with animals that a certain measure of independence against Nature is achieved for the first time. Of animals there are two kinds: the herbivores which feed on the immobile plant world are inferior to the beasts of prey which have to hunt and kill their food before they can eat it. Man is a beast of prey.

Yet there is a vast difference between man and all other animals. Their technics is generic, impersonal, unalterable. Man alone selects his technics, and what is more, makes it, and makes it in accordance with individual needs. He has wrested the privilege of creation from Nature. That is why he is the rebel. He has set Art in opposition to Nature. How was he enabled to do it? Through the simultaneous genesis of the hand and the tool. At a later stage, speech and enterprise are born. They make it possible for man to abandon his own weapons and his own tactics in the daily struggle to combine with others for collective action. A culture thus comes into existence. It requires a distinction between the activities of thought and the activities of the hand. Mental activity must precede and direct executive activity. Mind therefore gains the ascendancy. But both mental worker and manual labourer become, body and soul, parts of a higher organisation and incur an enormous loss of freedom.

That is the story of every culture. Western or Faustian culture is unique. All former cultures were content to make use of plants and animals, and rob Nature of her treasures of wood and mineral. Western culture seeks to supplant Nature. "To build a world oneself, to be oneself God—that is the Faustian inventor's dream, and from it has sprung all our designing and redesigning of machines to approximate as nearly as possible to the unattainable limit of perpetual motion."

But the actual is necessarily the transient. Everything born must die. Western civilization must die and the signs of its collapse are increasing: the machine, by its multiplicity and refinement, is defeating its own purpose; the leader is turning away from practical occupations to pure speculation; and, above all, machine technology has been taught to non-European peoples to whom it is not an inward, vital necessity. Machine technics will end with Faustian man. "Faced as we are with this destiny, there is only one world-outlook that is worthy of us . . . . . better a short life, full of deeds and glory than a long life without content." Let us eat and drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die.

It will be gathered from the above summary that Spengler conceives of history as a series of increasingly audacious but invariably unsuccessful rebellions against Nature—a series of which the successive stages are: animal, man, and the various cultures culminating in Faustian culture. For the reactionary implications of this philosophy as it bears on social policy and personal conduct, I must refer the reader to Spengler's book. I can only make two observations here. I think it is an anthropomorphical fallacy to treat a culture as though it possessed the unity and reality ascribable to the individual man, and to discuss it in terms of life and death and destiny. Can any one say whether Greek culture is alive or dead? Is Indian culture extinct? In the second place, it is difficult to admit, considering the trend of modern scientific thought, that there is an essential antagonism between Nature and Life or Mind. Scornfully though he writes of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Spengler's own outlook is, like theirs, profoundly materialistic.

K. S. SHELVANKAR

The Conflict of the Individual and the Mass in the Modern World. By EVERETT DEAN MARTIN. (Henry Holt & Company, New York.)

It is one thing to recognize the defects of Western civilization, another to assign them to their proper causes and still a third to suggest the remedy. In this volume, the infirmities of democracy, as it has developed in the West, are ably diagnosed, but the tracing of their causes is somewhat less convincing and the prescription for their cure is weak.

Two evils Mr. Martin finds outstanding, paradoxical as their concurrence may seem. These are the jealous attempt of the infantile many to prevent the emergence of mature individuals from the mass, and, existing side by side with it, the general overstimulation of personal ambition in the direction of material success. The levelling down resulting from their interplay means the dominance of second-rate individuals in society and the triumph of mediocrity all along the line. The more sinister aspect of the widespread confusion of progress with prosperity is the rampant growth and increasing urgency of the concrete demands upon life by more and more people, quite irrespective of the ability of civilization to meet the demands of all and—a point Mr. Martin fails to make—of the deserts of those making them. He gives a nightmare metaphor of the situation: "We are like passengers on a train speeding through the dark, with an ever-accelerating pace and without a headlight."

"Crowd-mindedness" is the scapegoat in Mr. Martin's opinion. He succeeds in laying upon it many of the shortcomings of modern democracy, but his thesis falls short of an adequate plan for banishing it from the community. He advises learning to recognize the symptoms of crowd mentality, that we may be on our guard against it, and proposes as cure for it the development of habits of critical thinking, skepticism, and doubt, learning to face the facts about ourselves, and distinguishing clearly between real and fictitious personal superiority. The rationale of these steps he leaves largely to the imagination.

Four elements in our civilization are cited as directly contributory to crowd-mentality and the submergence of the individual in the mass. One of these is mass production, the psychological effect of which has been to vulgarize the values of civilization. Mr. Martin denies that our modern industrialism, in spite of its material advantages, really makes easier the struggle to live, any more than the multiplication of machine-made goods adds to the deeper satisfactions of mankind.

And just as industrialism, by reducing the individual worker to a mere numerical unit, depersonalizes a man's relations to his fellows and to his work, the political machinery tends to reduce personality to a minimum. The State is shown as the successor of the mediæval Church, representing on the whole an advance over it, and the cult of the State as filling in many ways the place formerly occupied by orthodox religion. The soulless mechanism of the modern State, however, places leadership in the hands of the numerical majority, whereas the mediæval Church did recognize the fact of spiritual inequality and provided for the leadership of those considered the best.

The self-idolatry of the mass under modern democracy means still further minimizing of personal worth. With the growing ascendance of the insignificant, Mr. Martin sees culture and all values except the material declining rapidly, a narrow nationalism or class consciousness and a comfortable and unreflective optimism prevailing, while ethics becomes a matter of taboos.

The philosophy of Naturalism, which Mr. Martin presents as materialism pure and simple, is analyzed as on a par with the other causal factors, but surely more of the evils of present-day democracy are to be laid at the door of a materialistic philosophy of life than can be charged to the others. Much as the author deplores the common acceptance of being modern as the criterion of being

right, frankly as he admits the spiritual cost of Naturalism, he yet is too much under the domination of such thinkers as Bertrand Russell to repudiate the materialistic hypothesis. He pays lip homage to the new scientific spirit of the 18th and 19th centuries as "the greatest and most promising leap forward that humanity had yet made," but he is keenly alive to the values sacrificed by the logicians. He cannot escape their reasoning, but his intuition obviously rebels against its implications and he looks back half regretfully from the bleak negation of Naturalism to the outgrown superstitions of mediæval Christianity. But bitter as he finds the fruit of materialistic logic, he yet fears its loss in the event of a throwback to some sort of evangelicalism, which he sees as a not unlikely cyclic development.

Like many another reluctant convert to materialism, Mr. Martin seems unable to visualize a possible middle ground between materialism and superstition, or to recognize that the facts adduced by modern science are susceptible of quite another interpretation than its votaries offer, namely, that found in the philosophy of the ancient Aryans, satisfying alike to reason and intuition and endowing life with purpose and meaning, which in Mr. Martin's scheme it sadly lacks.

Ph. D.

Erewhon and Erewhon Revisited. By SAMUEL BUTLER. (Everyman's Library, J. M. Dent & Sons.)

Samuel Butler was perhaps not among the greatest Victorians, but he was certainly, as he described himself, the *enfant terrible* of the age. Churchmen and scientists, the bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia alike found in him a powerful and mordant critic whose shafts drove home none the less effectively because they lacked the vehement, prophetic energy of a Carlyle or the expert authority of a Huxley. Though painting was his chosen vocation, it is as an author that he is remembered. His vigorous and versatile mind continually led him to combat what he considered to be the errors of his time, and of his books one or two have gained a permanent place in English literature.

Erewhon has been compared with *Gulliver's Travels* for its satire, but apart from its exquisite ridicule of the Established Churches—under the name of Musical Banks, which deal in a sort of toy money; "of course every one knew that their commercial value was *nil*, but all those who wished to be considered respectable thought it incumbent upon them to retain a few coins in their possession, and to let them be seen from time to time . . . . ."—apart from this, its interest for us lies rather in its brilliant anticipation of ideas and problems which are very much to the fore in our own day; in its recognition of the vegetable kingdom as being as truly alive and sensitive as men and animals; in its insistence that legal "punishment" should be in the nature of medical or psychopathic treatment; and above all, in its prescience of what we realise now to be an actual danger, the tyranny of the machine. In the interest of their souls, the Erewhonians are finally obliged to destroy all mechanical inventions produced after a certain date!

Erewhon Revisited has an organic unity wanting in the earlier book; its theme is the re-appearance of the founder of a religion among the people who profess to follow him, and the embarrassments caused thereby. Of more value than the satire, as Mr. Desmond McCarthy points out in an admirable introduction to this volume, are the sermons and dialogues interpolated through the narrative. They contain a statement of Butler's view that immortality means not the survival of man as a separate entity but the persistence of his influence on succeeding generations.

K. S. S.

Mencius on the Mind, Experiments in Multiple Definition. By I. A. RICHARDS. (Kegan Paul, London. 10*s.* 6*d.*)

This is a strange book. Dr. Richards, however, embarks upon his novel thesis with the determination of a pioneer. He wants nothing less than to make us *word*-conscious. We have been using our words, he says, for twenty thousand years at least (perhaps a million) *incuriously*, as primitive man used his sticks and stones, his animals and plants. Now, in this generation, we are becoming more and more self-conscious, sex-conscious, race-conscious, and world-conscious; so we ought to become *word*-conscious too.

That is the point of Dr. Richards' most interesting book. He builds up an argument round the psychological teaching of Mencius because he refers, especially, to the problems of Sino-European interpretation. Neither Chinese nor European languages and mentality are being satisfactorily conveyed across the intervening barriers of space and time—to the mutual disadvantage of either side. The problem of multiple definitions in dealing with words, and the ideas they symbolise, has thus intruded itself very keenly on Dr. Richards! But Mencius, the great moralist of the fourth century B. C., *the Second Sage* (after Confucius) of China, is merely a peg upon which to hang a varied assortment of suggestions for the development of psychological word-consciousness.

Certain passages from Mencius are printed as an Appendix with alternative English renderings under the Chinese words. The preceding chapters tackle the problems (*a*) of translation from the Chinese into a European tongue, (*b*) of all translation in general. With that, there is a suggested technique for comparative studies.

The difficulty in our dealings one with another, Europeans with Chinese, is the barrier of different modes of thought, and consequently, a different use of words. Dr. Richards ably puts it thus :—

> To a mind formed by modern Western training, the interpretation of the Chinese Classics seems often an adventure among possibilities of thought and feeling rather than an encounter with facts.

The whole approach to the use of words in China is fundamentally different from our own.

The force of a single word in the Chinese is more dependent on the rest of the phrase and the general context than is usual in Western languages. Hence the mystery as to how good Chinese scholars decide which meanings are or are not admissible.

> One gets the impression that an unwritten and unelucidatable tradition accompanies and directs their interpretation. It is as though the text were only a bare fragmentary notation—to be supplemented out of a store of unrecorded knowledge—much as a music score may receive a special interpretation handed down in and through a school.

The difficulty will not get less with time. The number of persons equipped to-day with a *purely* Chinese scholarship is rapidly diminishing. Before long, there will be nobody studying Mencius into whose mind philosophical and other ideas of modern Western origin have not made their way. The Chinese scholar of the near future will not be intellectually much nearer Mencius than any Western pupil of Aristotle and Kant. "Unless the thinking which has been fundamental to historic China can somehow be explained in Western terms, it seems inevitably doomed to oblivion."

The other side must be considered too. There is an even graver urgency there. We have been discovering during the last century how much we lost through Greek ideas coming into post-Renaissance currency in poor or inaccurate translations. Our whole system of theology has been vitiated by conscious or unconscious mistranslation. Similar avoidable accidents on a vastly greater scale threaten the new language of modern China. An enormous crop of

> maladjusted hybrid meanings—from the crossing of our ambiguities with Chinese ambiguities—seems certain to be perpetuated in language to the unnecessary distress and confusion of many generations. *Unless*, that is, a deliberately revised technique for recording

and comparing the ranges of our words and their words can be brought into action *in time*.

Dr. Richards applies himself nobly to the task. But he is only a pioneer. May we suggest that the proper person to build the next section of the bridge is an Indian scholar? Geographically he would be well-placed. Long association with European tongues, and roots far sunk into a common Aryan past, enable him to approach our side with competent understanding. On the other hand, his Oriental mentality and his training in the approach to psychological and intellectual problems in the silence of cosmic *communion* bring him nearer to China than we can hope, as a rule, to be. The word *ch'i*, so imrtapont to Chinese esoteric texts, can surely best be explained by an Indian student familiar with the meaning and workings of the breath. An Indian, too, is more qualified to explain fully to the Western mind the Chinese moral attitude to the self. There is no officially recognised war in the Chinese mind between the Soul and the Body, between will and desire—hence that absence of a sense of sin which used to puzzle all the missionaries.

No—to understand Mencius, and often in other sorts of translation, we must perhaps efface our whole tradition of thinking and learn another. What is needed, is "greater imaginative resource in a double venture—in imagining other purposes than our own and other structures for the thought that serves them".

R. A. L. ARMSTRONG

The Devil's Camera. By R. G. BURNETT and E. D. MARTELL. (The Epworth Press, London. 1*s.*)

The Cinema, everyone admits, is a powerful influence in modern life, but it is perhaps not equally widely recognized that its effects have so far been more harmful than beneficial. From a purely intellectual point of view, the majority of films "released" each week are crude and brainless productions. Considered in their general social context, the case against them is more serious still. In spite of themselves—for the Cinema industry has shown little concern for standards other than technical—they propagate ethical and cultural values, and the values they have hitherto propagated will not bear examination. They will be disclaimed by most men in their reflective moments; their deficiency in the light of some high religious or moral ideal need scarcely be discussed.

The main indictment against the Cinema is that it employs its enormous powers of portrayal and suggestion to surround with glamour things which are essentially sordid and tedious, as all but the most callow will admit—things like lust and crime and war. These are no doubt part of the stuff of life as we know it, and art cannot exclude them, but *art* will give them meaning—it will set them in their perspective; it will interpret them in terms of a larger idea. Such art the Cinema most decidedly lacks, and lacking it, it becomes, inevitably, in its present state, a systematic incitement to lechery and murder.

While exposing and denouncing, with much factual detail, these aspects of the Cinema, Messrs. Burnett and Martell are not blind to its possibilities. They recognize that several films recently shown offer entertainment which does not degrade and education which does not bore the public. They only insist that professional critics are not sufficiently alive to their responsibilities and do not make the emphatic protests necessary at the appearance of pernicious films. For the rest, they contend that the Protestant Churches have let slip an opportunity of influencing the public on religious lines, which it is not too late too retrieve. Whether it is desirable to depict religion as something pictorial, or legendary and narrative, they do not stop to consider.

K. S. S.

I Lost My Memory: The Case as the Patient Saw It. (Faber and Faber, London. 7*s.* 6*d.*)

The "Patient," whose name is withheld for obvious reasons, is understood to be a well-known writer on scientific subjects. His story begins with the war, in which he served as an officer and was several times wounded. While in hospital in 1916, he became engaged to a lady on the nursing staff, whom he afterwards married. When the war came to an end, he was appointed to the teaching staff of one of the English Universities, a position which he held until 1930. In the mean time, he tells us, "the hospital romance . . . . had not been altogether a success. The marriage had continued through varying fortunes for thirteen years, when it had ended in an undefended suit for divorce, in which I had been respondent". As a result of this suit the "Patient" lost his job. The early months of 1931 saw him re-married, in monetary straits owing to unemployment, with the painful experiences of his first marriage fresh and pungent in his memory, and beset with anxiety as to how he might rebuild his shattered career.

One morning he went out of his boarding-house to buy some tobacco; and the next thing he was aware of was that he was wandering about, dirty and unshaven, many miles from home. He got in touch with the police, and through them with his wife. It appeared that three days had elapsed since his disappearance; and that he had lost all memory, not only of these days, but of the nineteen years that preceded them. His wife, who came to fetch him home, seemed to him to be a complete stranger; the war, his marriages, his academical work, and his financial and other worries, were all forgotten.

The book tells us in considerable detail how, with the aid of his wife and a very sympathetic and understanding doctor, he gradually recovered his memory of the lost nineteen years. For many months, while the treatment was going on, the "Patient's" mind was the scene of a desperate struggle between his conscious self, trying its utmost to remember, and another, subconscious self that seemed determined he should never do so. As time went on, it appeared as though the loss of memory had been deliberately brought about by this other self in order to wipe out from the "Patient's" mind all the painful episodes of the past and especially those in which his first wife had played a part. Scenes and incidents, directly or remotely connected with her, were the last to be recovered. Even the horrible details of trench warfare proved easier to bring back to memory.

We could wish that the "Patient" had gone a little deeper in his analysis of his mental states. He makes it clear that the whole of his personal memory of the years between 1912 and 1931 had gone—scenes, people, incidents, the details of reading and study, were all obliterated. But what of that which we may venture to call the impersonal memory—the shape given to the mind by abstract thought, philosophy, aspiration? Between the ages of twenty and thirty-nine, an educated, thoughtful man, capable of introspective analysis, as the "Patient" assuredly is, must have worked out for himself a philosophy of life. He must have passed through religious experiences, even though he may have rejected religion in the narrower sense of the word. Were all these forgotten? Did he lapse back from the thought and experience-begotten philosophy of maturity to the cruder outlook of his youth? Was the inner life forgotten as well as the outer? His replies to these questions would be extremely interesting.

To understand loss of memory, we have first to know what memory itself is. In the opinion ordinarily current in the West, memory is entirely a matter of the physical brain. An action of consciousness is accompanied—or caused—by a movement in the cerebral substance. Revive this movement along the same nerve tracts, and you re-create the original state of consciousness. But Eastern Occultism has another story to tell.

Says H. P. Blavatsky

No manifestation . . . can ever be lost from the *Skandhic* record of a man's life. Not the smallest sensation, the most trifling action, impulse, thought, impression, or deed, can fade or go out from, or in the Universe. We may think it unregistered by our memory, unperceived by our consciousness, yet it will still be recorded on the tablets of the astral light. . . .There are cells in our brain that receive and convey sensations and impressions, but this once done, their mission is accomplished. These cells of the supposed 'organ of memory' are the *receivers* and *conveyers* of all the pictures and impressions of the past, not their *retainers*. Under various conditions and stimuli, they can receive instantaneously the reflection of these astral images back again, and this is called *memory, recollection, remembrance*: but they do not preserve them. When it is said that one has lost his memory, or that it is weakened, it is only a *façon de parler;* it is our memory-cells alone that are enfeebled or destroyed. The window glass allows us to see the sun, moon, stars, and all the objects outside clearly; crack the pane and all these outside images will be seen in a distorted way; break the window-pane altogether and replace it with a board, or draw the blind down, and the images will be shut out altogether from your sight. But can you say because of this, that all these images—sun, moon, and stars—have disappeared, or that by repairing the window with a new pane, the same will not be reflected again into your room? . . . . . The Universal Memory preserves every motion, the slightest wave and feeling that ripples the waves of differentiated nature, of man or of the Universe.—(*Lucifer* for Oct. 1891, p. 122)

In the case of the "Patient," his subconscious desire to escape from painful thought seems to have grown too strong to be controlled by his conscious self; and, once fully emancipated, it "pulled down the blind" and shut out the abhorrent memories. That our desire-driven lower nature can revolt successfully against the lordship of the higher, whose sceptre only too often is but feebly held, is a commonplace of experience; but the rebel in such cases, impelled by the longing to win pleasure or avoid pain, usually seeks to quench his thirst in stronger and more poisonous draughts than those that come from the river Lethe.

R. A. V. M.

Nicholas of Cusa. By HENRY BETT. (Methuen & Co. Ltd., London. *7s. 6d.*)

This book gives, quite impartially because quite unconsciously, proofs of the existence of the Theosophical Movement in Europe in the early fifteenth century. In fact it is only by proper comparison with other systems of thought that the reader will be able to get the full value from the book, able to see that the inconsistencies of which Mr. Bett accuses Nicholas exist only in his own mind.

Where the same aim, purpose and teaching are found there, consciously or unconsciously, in the same movement, despite outer differences of organisation and nomenclature. Universal Unity and Universal Truth are the two ideals of that Theosophical Movement. Let us turn then to Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa who lived in the transition period between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. His whole life and work was the practical application of his thought:

The whole of his thought, political, philosophical, and theological alike, is marked by a persistent method of intellectual reconciliation and by a passion for unity. He was the advocate of unity in the political system of Europe; he was the apostle of unity amid the ecclesiastical dissensions of Christendom; and he was the philosopher of unity also, who consistently sought to see the beginning and the end of all things, the real essence and the real significance of all existence, as hidden in the super-essential Unity of God.

His metaphysical teaching tallies with the Universal Truths lying deep at the heart of every religion. That identity shines clearly even through Mr. Bett's occasional misconceptions,—for example, that of Christ as merely one particular Son of God—and other misunderstandings like that of the doctrine of evil, all of which are due to too limited an interpretation.

Nicholas wrote of the Nameless God, who can best be described by negations, being without attributes. Others have called It Parabrahm, Ain-Soph or Sat, the Causeless Cause of all.

God is thus the aggregate (*complicatio*) of all things as the essential and eternal ground of their being. Things are the evolution (*explicatio*) of God, as the finite, multiple

differentiated development of what is grounded in Him, though in Him the finite is infinitude, the multiple is unity, and the difference is identity. There is, so to speak, one ultimate being, which may be viewed from two sides. On the higher side, it is One and Absolute, superexistent, the essence of all that is—God. On the lower side, it is multiple and relative, a derived and dependent existence, an evolution into the visible and the temporal—the universe.

The Secret Doctrine says:

. . . . in Occult mataphysics there are, properly speaking, two "ONES"—the One on the unreachable plane of Absoluteness and "One" on the plane of Emanations....Parabrahm (the One Reality, the Absolute) is the field of Absolute Consciousness, *i. e.* that Essence which is out of all relation to conditioned existence, and of which conscious existence is a conditioned symbol. But once that we pass in thought from this (to us) Absolute Negation, duality supervenes in the contrast of Spirit (or consciousness) and Matter, Subject and Object. Spirit (or Consciousness) and Matter are, however, to be regarded, not as independent realities, but as the two facets or aspects of the Absolute (Parabrahm), which constitute the basis of conditioned Being whether subjective or objective.

This "coincidence of contraries" is also one of the central ideas of Nicholas. It finds its culmination in the statement that "The absolute maximum is therefore a unity that is all and in all, since it is the maximum. Because it has no opposite, it coincides with the minimum." Nicholas used very largely the mathematical symbols, of which the most important is the Hermetic one of Deity as an *infinite* circle whose circumference (the maximum) is nowhere, and whose centre (the minimum) is everywhere. Mr. Bett's objections to the coincidence of maximum and minimum only hold good of a *finite* circle. Similarly, the alleged inconsistency of using "explicatio" to denote the downward movement of life from perfection to imperfection, as well as the movement upward, can be explained by the motion of life being circular (to be more accurate, spiral), and therefore having not two different movements, but one. The concepts of Copernicus, with their world-waking effects, had their inception in the mathematical symbology of Nicholas of Cusa. Indeed, certain medieval kabalists held both persons to have been incarnations of the same being.

As in other systems, a triple rhythm runs through that of Nicholas, since everything existing is the microcosm of God as a tri-unity. Knowledge also, he teaches, is triune, though "The truth is absolute, and all knowledge is relative. There can be no exact measure for truth, except truth itself".

Space, however, will only allow one more quotation.

Thus as an individual existence attains more unity, it fulfils its essential being more and more, and at the same time becomes less and less merely individual. So that the very apex of being is absolute unity, where the individual, as separate, ceases to be, and yet is more truly than ever, since the essential ground of every individual lies in the absolute unity.

And for that description of Nirvana, as well as for his rescue of the wisdom of Nicholas from obscurity, we must be grateful to Mr. Bett.

E. W.

Asiatic Mythology. A Detailed Description and Explanation of the Mythologies of all the Great Nations of Asia.—By J. HACKIN, Keeper of the Musée Guimet, Paris; C. H. MARCHAL; HENRI MASPERO; H. DE WILMAN-GRABOWSKA; SERGE ELISEEV; CLEMENT HUART; RAYMONDE LINOSSIER. With an Introduction by Paul-Louis Couchoud. Translated from the French by F. M. Atkinson. (George G. Harrap & Co., Ltd., London. 63s.)

We are told in the Introduction to this sumptuous and fascinating work that the scholars, who have collaborated in writing it, are all connected with the Musée Guimet of Paris that "incomparable museum of religions". The book is divided into sections, in which the respective mythologies of Persia, the Kāfirs, Indian Buddhism, Lamaism, Indo-China and Java, Central Asia, Modern China, Japan, are each described by an expert. Mr. Atkinson's work as translator has been done competently. The appeal of the book is rather to

the thoughtful "man in the street" than to the specialist: its intention is to introduce Asia to Europe, or in M. Couchoud's words, "to bring the two halves of humanity face to face". He goes on to say:

On the very long and very winding road that by a slow ascent will lead us to the knowledge of Asia the study of mythology is the first stage, the indispensable rudiment, the ABC.

It is through art that Asia first of all shows herself to us. Thousands of figured objects, prints, scrolls, statues—obsess our eyes. Through these we find ourselves in contact with an unknown world.

All art is thought.

The first condition necessary to understand a work of art in which a theme is treated is to know that theme. In Asia, as elsewhere, three-fourths of the subjects represented are religious. Hence we must begin by deciphering the mythology that inspires them . . . . . It is lazy fallacy to think that art can be appreciated apart from its subject. Indifference to the subject is mark of an ageing art. It appears among a sophisticated public to whom every subject has become commonplace and trite. It does not apply to periods of spontaneous and popular art. There everything is significant, everything speaks . . . . .

M. Couchoud and the school he represents have quite discarded the arrogant assumption of superiority and patronage that characterised most of the Victorian Orientalists. Their attitude towards the religions of Asia is both sympathetic and enlightened. Writes M. Couchoud:

We Western peoples with our spirits still barbarian and too much caught up with what the philosophers call realism, we find it hard to comprehend the genesis of the gods. An invincible prepossession leads us to believe that God, the gods, the demons, are in things and outside ourselves. They are no such thing . . . .

He goes on to quote with approval the words of Bodhidharma, founder of Zen Buddhism, who told the Chinese Emperor, Leang Wu Ti:

There is no Buddha outside the heart. Save the reality of the heart all is imaginary. The heart is Buddha, and Buddha is the heart. To conceive that he is seen in an external place is but delirium.

And the scriptures of East and West echo his words when they tell us:

Seek in the impersonal for the 'Eternal man'; and having sought him out, look inward: thou art Buddha.

The kingdom of heaven is within you.

If we contrast the words quoted above with the views expressed by the great writers on comparative religion of the last generation, we shall be in a position to appreciate the enormous change in the estimation of Eastern religions by Western scholars that has come about during the past fifty years. At the time when H. P. Blavatsky began to demonstrate in her writings the profound spiritual and even historical significance of the myths of the ancients, the attitude of European scholars was contemptuous, or at best patronising. Max Müller laid it down that mythology was "a disease of language". Le Page Renouf called it "a disease which springs up at a peculiar stage of human culture"; while those writers who, like Madame Blavatsky and Gerald Massey, championed a wider and wiser view, were dubbed cranks, unworthy of serious attention.

The authors of *Asiatic Mythology* make little or no attempt to interpret the myths they narrate in terms of the inner and outer history of man and nature. They are content to give such an account of the subject as to supply an explanatory commentary on the illustrations, which cover, with more or less completeness, the whole field of Eastern religious art. These illustrations have been chosen with discrimination and admirably reproduced, some of the plates in particular affording striking demonstration of the perfection that has been reached by the modern art of printing in colour. Among the more important subjects depicted are scenes from the life of the Buddha, photographed from the sculptures of Amarāvatī, Sānchī, Borobudur, and Angkor Vat; Brahmin sculptures; Chinese and Japanese prints and bronzes; and last, but not least, an extremely interesting series of Tibetan paintings. These are copied on a much reduced scale and are not coloured; but even thus some of them are so beautiful as to suggest that the originals must be indeed masterpieces both in design and execution.

R. A. V. M.

CORRESPONDENCE

"THEOSOPHY AND SCIENCE"

Cecil Williams, in his comment on my article in THE ARYAN PATH of March 1932, raises objections which indicate that he did not quite get the points I was attempting to make. For this I am willing to accept part of the responsibility in not having made myself sufficiently clear. Part of the fault, however, seems to lie in careless reading of the article. "The philosophy of Kant" he says, "misses the Theosophical viewpoint". Of course it does. On p. 196 I stated that Kant's work threw light on Theosophy only "from the ordinary material standpoint".

Mr. Williams has similarly misinterpreted my remarks on space. He refers to H. P. B.'s statement in *The Secret Doctrine* (commentary of Stanza 1, p. 35) but at the end of this paragraph, H. P. B. refers the reader to the "Proem pp. 2 *et seq*" where she says (p. 21)—referring to that first stanza—"such a state can only be symbolised," and on p.14 she says, " 'Beness' is symbolised in the Secret Doctrine under two aspects. On the one hand, absolute abstract Space, representing bare subjectivity, etc."

Again, in his reference to the Mahatma letter Mr. Williams goes wide of the point. In the first place he misquotes me as saying "time is merely the form of our external perception". I said *internal*, not external. This is minor, but he then quotes *Mahatma Letters* (p. 193) as contradicting me in saying "the whole Cosmos is a gigantic chronometer". So it is, of course; and if he had quoted the remaining few words any possible misunderstanding would have been avoided. What the Mahatma actually said was: "the whole Cosmos is a gigantic chronometer *in one sense*". (Italics mine).

I believe that if Mr. Williams would read my article a little more carefully he would see that I was not trying to "square Theosophy with ephemeral scientific and philosophic theory," but merely attempting to point out to those more familiar with materialistic science than with Theosophy, that even science and philosophy—carried far enough—will lead one to indications of Theosophy.

New Jersey PHILIP CHAPIN JONES

[In an early issue of THE ARYAN PATH we will publish another article of Mr. Jones, one "which will clarify any remaining confusion in the mind of Mr. Williams".—EDS.]

VEGETARIANISM

Having read with great interest H. Reinheimer's convincing reasons for vegetarianism, may I add a very personal account of my own conversion? From an early age I had loved all animals. Unkindness to these creatures was an act of irreverence to the Deity.

But I was still very young, and possessed a touching faith in the wisdom and goodness of all my elders. It had not occurred to me to question the rightness of the food provided for me at the family table. Suddenly the scales fell from my eyes, and I realised with shame and horror that I was feeding my body with the cruelly slaughtered bodies of beloved animal brethren. And, on further enquiry, I ascertained that no dire necessity compelled the human race to this inhuman practice. It seemed inexplicable that my fellow men, who claimed so much superiority in mental and moral calibre over what they described as "the brutes that perish," should be content in such a matter to place themselves on a level with the carnivorous beasts whom they constantly condemned as rapacious and cruel. How, I questioned, had it come about that men reverenced their own bodies so little as to be content to make them into walking sepulchres, unclean and foul; to build the very temples of the Living God with wanton destruction and death? Small wonder that disease in every imaginable form is rampant. The city streets

are rendered unsightly and horrible by the display of flayed carcases hung row on row outside the butchers' shops. I turned my gaze in many directions, and from all quarters fresh evidence proved the appalling nature and far-reaching consequences of our unnatural crime against our lesser brethren. Never more would I, now made conscious of responsibility, have part or lot in the slaughter of the innocents. I know that to all my brothers Light is destined to come. However dormant it may seem, Love *is* ever present in every unit and, sooner or later, will make Itself manifest by bestowing on all such realization of the sacredness and Oneness of life as will restore the harmony that should, and in Reality, doth even now prevail, between all the manifold ideas in the Divine Mind.

Malvern, England. TOM LEON

THE DRAMA OF LIFE
(*A Rejoinder*)

Allow me space to comment upon a remark by Mr. Fausset in a review of my book *Towards a Systematic Study of Vedanta* in the July ARYAN PATH. The reviewer has the rare gift of intellectual sympathy and imaginative insight and I am grateful for his criticism and appreciation.

There is, however, one point which requires elucidation. Mr. Fausset has realized the true import of the doctrine of *Līlā* as expounded by Śaṃkara with reference to the problem of Creation:

> Dr. Das comments very helpfully upon Śaṃkara's use of the word 'play' to explain the principle of creation. But he neglects to cite the example of art.

I do plead guilty but wish to submit an explanation. The reviewer observes:

> The supreme moments of artistic creation afford, perhaps, the closest human analogy to what Śaṃkara meant by the Divine 'Play' . . . . And the unique significance of Śaṃkara's conception of creation lay in the fact that he viewed Isvara as a supreme artist, constrained in his cosmic play by no such purpose or end as the self-conscious human mind pursues.

I am in hearty agreement with this but I could not, out of a scrupulous regard for authenticity of my exegesis of the Śaṃkarite point of view, make use of an example to which the great *Achārya* does not appear to have lent countenance. What appeals to him instead is the comparison of the Divine Creator to a sovereign playing at dice (*Sārvabhaumasya dyutakridādivat*). This analogy is peculiarly apt and felicitous in the context in which it appears—namely, the fact of creation not being conditioned by an operative end (*Na prayojanavatvāt*). Says Śaṃkara:

> Even if into all human rendering of *Līlā* one may project or read a subtle or refined purpose, yet into Divine creativity no such reading of purpose, in ever so attenuated a form, is feasible.

Leaving aside the letter of Śaṃkara's exposition, one may claim a certain amount of latitude and draw upon the example of art, which would not in any way offend against the spirit of Śaṃkara's exegesis. This has been done—as evidence I may refer to the very opening paragraph of my discussion of this very problem where I have unreservedly spoken of 'the artistic appeal and suggestiveness' [of *Līlā*] (p. 195).

But the example of art does not, and indeed cannot satisfy the requirements of a philosophical explanation of creation. Creation conceived as a *Līlā* or sport is a pseudo-logical explanation, or rather an evasion of it. In the very first paragraph of the Lecture dealing with this problem I have observed that *līlā*, like *māyā*, " is a *description*, not an *explanation*. For what does it amount to after all? It amounts to saying in so many words that God creates the world because it is his nature to create". The verdict that is thus registered in advance has been progressively justified. What I have sought to demonstrate is the failure of Art in encompassing the secret of creation in a religious reference. It is instructive to note that the position to which I have been led, by following strictly the lead of Śaṃkara's arguments, is somewhat similar to the procedure of Hegel in this regard. The Spirit, by virtue of its inner dialectic, passes be-

yond the region of Art as well as of Religion until it awakens to a self-conscious articulation of its own nature in Philosophy. Pursuing the drift of his own logic of absolutism, Śaṃkara has, in a like manner, demonstrated the failure of the aesthetic or the theistic category in its effort to grasp the true import of creation—which consists, as I have endeavoured to show, in tracing it up to Brahman "conceived as *Ānanda* that necessarily goes out of itself into an Other and reveals or fulfils itself therein, for it is the very nature of *Ānanda* to reveal itself (*ānanda-prakāśyorabhedāt*), as one of Śaṃkara's disciples commented in this regard" (p. 216). As I have further contended "it is in this concept of *ānanda* as the supreme principle and essence of *Atman* that all consequent developments of the Vedantic theory are anticipated and summed up" (p. 217); for "it is only *ānanda* which is essentially self-communicative and self-revealing. Creation proceeds out of the abundance of the Joy. But the end of creation cannot be an abstract or universal bliss anterior to concrete and specific forms of blessedness and joy. Every form of bliss or *ānanda* is *ipso facto* concrete and individual" (p. 221). Accordingly "all created beings are the living embodiments of the blessedness or *ānanda* of the Creator, affirms Śaṃkara" on the authority of the scriptural text—*tasyaivānandasya ekaikamātrāmupajīvanti* (p. 222); and finally this very text already "far-reaching in significance when read in the context of the scriptural text, no less illuminating on the point—that the Supreme Being or God is verily *Ānanda* or *Rasa* and having evoked or elicited *rasa* He realizes *ānanda* or enjoys His own being (*Raso vai sah Rasam hyevāyam labdhvānandī bhavāti*)" (p. 225)—gives us the pivotal principle of Creation as well as the very quintessence of a Philosophy of Art. But this is a theme too large to be expounded here.

Calcutta SAROJ KUMAR DAS

ALLOPATHIC AND AYURVEDIC SYSTEMS

May I draw the attention of your readers to Dr. Samey's letter in the *Bangalore Mail* of 21st September, answering an attack on Ayurvedic system by Sir T. H. Symons in *The Indian Empire Review*. In that connection may I say that it is lamentable that the Allopathic Doctors in India should have chosen to be ignorant of the ancient system and yet revile it.

It must be freely allowed that the knowledge of the medical profession is small as compared to the magnitude of its ignorance, and yet *ex-cathedra* declarations of some of them against the Ayurvedic System show a dangerous penchant toward scientific dogma. Towards the end of his life the famous Dr. Mackenzi wrote :—

> For any doctor who engages conscientiously in general practice to look at a modern book on general medicine is for him to feel despair. At present the classification of disease is based upon no principle and is no more than an assemblage of conditions grouped according to the organ affected or the nature of the infection or the most predominant symptom.

But the Ayurvedic system of medicine has the best possible scientific foundation for it in its "Tridosha" theory, which some competent authority ought to write upon in your pages.

Bombay M. D.

REINCARNATION

As THE ARYAN PATH is interested in promulgating the doctrine of Reincarnation may I bring to the notice of your readers the Object of Mr. A. A. W. Mason's new novel *The Three Gentlemen*.

> To express my belief that we have lived before and carry into each new character what we have learned in the earlier lives. Thus discipline and passion for his country which Attilius Scourus learned in Roman Britain are the chief qualities of Anthony Scan the Elizabethan and Adrian Shard the Modern. To reproduce in the three lives something of a nation's as well as individual's continuity. To point to certain resemblances between the Roman Era when it had begun to go down hill and our own, a danger-signal no more. To write a story of love really triumphant.

Bombay REINCARNATIONIST

ENDS AND SAYINGS

"———————*ends of verse*
And sayings of philosophers."

HUDIBRAS.

The Presidential Address of Sir Alfred Ewing at the one hundred and first session of the British Association for the Advancement of Science is symptomatic and brings hope for the future. The commencement of a new cycle in racial evolution coincided with the dawn of the 20th century; its influences shook old grooves of thought, acquired habits, and inherited beliefs out of their stolidity. Science itself played an important part in ushering that era: Sir Alfred reminded his hearers of the "sensational, puzzling, upsetting" discoveries of the X-Rays by Röntgen in 1895, of radio-activity by Bacquerel in 1896, and of the electron by J. J. Thomson in 1897. Sir Alfred's retrospection in 1932 brings to mind H. P. Blavatsky's prophecy in 1888. In her *The Secret Doctrine* I, p. 612 she wrote:—

> We are at the very close of the cycle of 5,000 years of the present Aryan Kaliyuga; and between this time and 1897 there will be a large rent made in the Veil of Nature, and materialistic science will receive a death-blow.

The effects of Scientific Materialism on the thought of the people at large persists even to-day in spite of that death-blow. Men of science themselves were not able to see the far-reaching effects of materialism, on the moral outlook of the people. When men of science were witnessing matter fast becoming *maya*, their votaries lived and laboured as if matter was still solid and real. The energy of the new cycle produced the war of 1914–18 which disorganized further the mass mind; ever since it has laboured staggeringly; it must however soon find some level of stability and sanity. There is no other body of reformers so well-placed as the fraternity of scientists to guide and direct the race-mind to an ordered thinking. We regard some recent scientific pronouncements hopeful because they acknowledge that materialism is dead, that new vision of life and labour is necessary, and above all that scientific knowledge is a dangerous and deadly weapon in the hands of people with weak moral outlook.

Sir Alfred Ewing in his Presidential Address remarked at the outset that "our hundred years of Science have done sadly little towards curing the nations of mutual mistrust". Now science has not only given up its "cocksureness," but frankly admits that it is "groping in a half-light, tentatively grasping what at best are only half-truths". More—

In the present-day thinkers' attitude towards what is called mechanical progress we are conscious of a changed spirit. Admiration is tempered by criticism ; complacency has given way to doubt : doubt is passing into alarm. There is a sense of perplexity and frustration, as in one who has gone a long way and finds he has taken the wrong turning. To go back is impossible : how shall he proceed ? Where will he find himself if he follows this path or that ? An old exponent of applied mechanics may be forgiven if he expresses something of the disillusion with which, now standing aside, he watches the sweeping pageant of discovery and invention in which he used to take unbounded delight. It is impossible not to ask, Whither does this tremendous procession tend ? What, after all, is its goal ? What its probable influence upon the future of the human race ?

Rightly proud of the grand achievements of his own caste of Engineers Sir Alfred said—

The cornucopia of the engineer has been shaken over all the earth, scattering everywhere an endowment of previously unpossessed and unimagined capacities and powers. Beyond question many of these gifts are benefits to man, making life fuller, wider, healthier, richer in comforts and interests and in such happiness as material things can promote. But we are acutely aware that the engineer's gifts have been and may be grievously abused. In some there is potential tragedy as well as present burden. Man was ethically unprepared for so great a bounty. In the slow evolution of morals he is still unfit for the tremendous responsibility it entails. The command of Nature has been put into his hands before he knows how to command himself.

Sir Alfred Ewing at the end of his Address raised the question which has already been discussed by more than one eminent thinker in our pages—" How is man to spend the leisure he has won by handing over nearly all his burden to an untiring mechanical slave ? Dare we hope for spiritual betterment as will qualify him to use it well ?" Hope Sir Alfred may, and man has always hoped, but on the Door of the Temple of Wisdom are engraved the words—" Abandon Hope All Ye Who Enter Here." All will agree with Sir Alfred that " it is only by seeking he will find " but what will he seek and how ? A grave difficulty stands in the way of science giving the right help in this search. It will persist as long as the vogue of commercializing scientific discoveries persists. The disparity between the possibilities offered by scientific inventions, and the actual use they are put to is amazing. Contrast the possibilities for spiritual betterment locked up in the Cinema, the Radio, the Gramophone, with the daily use they are put to and all will readily agree with Mr. Joad who wrote in our pages (January 1930) that "science has given us powers fit for the gods and we bring to their use the mentality of schoolboys. . . . . In our scientific knowledge, we are gods ; in our ethics and politics, quarrelsome babies. And the babies are entrusted with the powers appropriate to the gods." Commerce exploits scientific knowledge and men of science alone can put a stop to it, and thus remove one great obstacle to social betterment.

> Science is utterly incompetent to explain the existence of the World as we know it now. Existence itself is a problem beyond its scope.

These are words of Sir Oliver Lodge who delivered the Oration during the 36th Foundation Week of the Union Society of the London University College, taking as his subject "Changes in Scientific outlook". The changes, he also pointed out "concern the revolt from the extreme materialism of the 19th century to more idealistic views". This change is not due to

> the work of idealistic philosophers and theologians, but of men who have immersed themselves in the facts of nature, who have penetrated deeply into physical laws, and have found in them support for idealistic views such as have been adumbrated and indistinctly foreshadowed since the time of Plato.

Sir Oliver Lodge himself has been a rebel for many years and has made no small contribution in ushering the idealistic view of life and universe. He said:

> Now it so happens that I and a few other men of science have been led by experiment and by a strictly rational method of procedure to discover a spiritual world or mode of existence, interacting with our bodily frame and all that we directly apprehend, and to speculations or surmises that it is a dominating reality to which appeals must be made if the design and purpose, and even the origin, of the material world is ever to be understood. Any system of philosophy, to be effective, must take the whole of existence into account; and the whole of existence cannot be taken into account if a portion of it is eschewed and anathematised and protected from contemplation. Now it so happens that orthodox Science and orthodox Theology have combined to oppose researches or enquiry into a number of phenomena which they genuinely think lie outside the pale, as unworthy of reasoned attention; the impression being that they constitute a source of danger, tending to lead us back into the darkness and confusions of primitive animistic superstitions. I fully admit that there is a real danger in that direction, but it is one which in the interests of truth we ought to face.

Space forbids our quoting more of these idealistic views of a spiritual universe, several of which are Theosophical. Not only orthodox science and theology oppose them but also

> a certain Group to-day who have arrogated to themselves the honourable titles of Rationalist and Free Thinker, who aim at a kind of inverted orthodoxy in a negative direction, who pride themselves on a disbelief in every kind of Theology, and who carry on a sort of war against those who are led by their rationalistic studies in Astronomy and other subjects to speculate on great themes.

We fully agree with Sir Oliver—"They have, it seems to me, overshot their mark, and become rather irrational and prejudiced on the other side."

Sir Alfred Ewing spoke as a pure scientist rich with the experience of a long career—the oldest President the Association has ever had; Sir Oliver Lodge as a renowned physicist who finds "that the spiritual world is the great reality: all else, however beautiful and interesting, is temporary and evanescent"; and now we must turn to a third knight, who as a thinker does not disdain to press science in the service of fair philosophy. Sir Herbert Samuel's Presidential Address to the British

Institute of Philsophy was on the subject of "Philosophy and the Ordinary Man". Defining Philosophy as the science of ideas he described the threefold sphere of philosophy to be the universe, mind and human conduct.

The world in these days is full of intellectual discontent. A chaos of thought is the mark of our time. The impact of modern science on the old theologies has bewildered mankind. The new proximity of races formerly far apart has increased the confusion. The soul of man is troubled and is seeking tranquillity. So there is an urgent need for an authoritative code of morals, based on an accepted system of ethics, resting in turn upon as firm a metaphysical foundation as human intelligence can construct from the materials that are given. There lies the task before philosophy; there the service she can render; there the way to win the gratitude of the peoples, wandering now hungry, thirsty, anxious, along paths that seem no longer clearly traced towards a destination no longer clearly seen. But does philosophy perceive that high task, or, perceiving, does she ensue it?

Sir Herbert Samuel complained that while Science had triumphantly marched on during the last three centuries "her sister Philosophy is seen sitting, somewhat ruefully, not very far from where she was three hundred years ago". Philosophy needs a "Bacon" and a "*Novum Organum*" to persuade her to take a new path.

Philosophy would be well advised to turn aside from *a priori* methods, to put no great faith in Logic as a guide, to observe respectfully, but from a distance the Categorical Imperative and the Absolute Good and all their transcendental offspring, and to press forward into the realms of metaphysics, and ethics along the roads opened up by mathematics, physics, biology in general and psychology in particular, and by the Social Sciences. Although the provinces of philosophy and science are different, they adjoin, and there are no frontier barriers; the traveller in each may pass freely into the other, and often indeed he will not know in which territory he may be standing.

It would be wise for the modern philosopher to weaken his faith in Logic, to put distance between himself and his favourite abstractions, and above all to establish contact with human problems marked by human heart-beats; but to depend on the findings of science, especially "up-to-date" psychology, will prove worse than abortive. The modern philosopher must avoid such a *cul-de-sac*. Let him not look for a new Bacon but turn to Plato of old. Let him by all means use science but guard against his own goddess being exploited by science or theology.

Sir Herbert followed up by stating that "the first principle which philosophy might receive as established by science, was the Law of Causality . . . The whole work of science has been built upon the recognition of this principle. Applied in fresh ways in the sphere of philosophy it might give valuable results". We agree and are quite prepared to render unto the Cæsars of modern science whatever credit might belong to them, but we must plead that homage be rendered to the ancient Gods whose visions and contemplations established Causality as a Law even when Greece

was young. Causality or Karma as a physical and moral, mental and spiritual Law has been the basis of thought and discussion among Indian philosophers for millennia. Why should modern philosophy, in search of a new mode of expression, be guided by ever changing young science, and neglect its own ancient line of inheritance ?

However, Sir Herbert Samuel examines this problem in his own way and in his treatment comes near to Theosophical propositions in more than one instance. His exposition of the doctrine of free will and determinism is masterly in parts, and would have been flawless and complete had he pressed into his service the Law of Reincarnation. "The prior causes, through the human personality, transmit their effects in a new form into the future. Looking back we see determinism, looking forward we see free will"—that is true; but no penetrating mind can accept this without the doctrine of many lives on earth. Truly have Karma and Reincarnation been called twin-doctrines.

We take the following from the October number of *The Theosophical Movement* (Bombay):—

True Theosophists will salute with gratitude Gandhiji, the high-souled leader whose philanthropic penance has been directly instrumental in removing to a considerable extent the age long curse of untouchability which orthodox Hinduism laid on nearly one-sixth of India's children, who by race, etc., belong to that religion. It is not only a relief that a precious life has been saved, it is also an inspiration that Piety and Will have won a grand victory over the forces of creedal and religious dogmatism. It is such self-sacrifice and determination which shape the future Bodhisattvas. We desire to express our deep appreciation to Gandhiji for the impetus he has given to the sacred Cause of Universal Brotherhood, and for one more example of working out of an inner conviction to its glorious fruition. Many hold convictions which are noble and grand but only a rare few possess the Karmic stamina and courage to live upto them.

Our archæologists have encountered a fresh problem. Sir E. Denison Ross in a letter to *The Times* of 21st September says:

M. Guillaume Hevesy, a learned Hungarian resident in Paris, has now made a very remarkable discovery, which, though it does not throw any light on the interpretation of the Indus script, raises a new problem regarding its origin. About 60 years ago Father Eyraud, a French missionary, discovered in the Easter Island an unknown style of writing, which appears not only on tablets of hard wood, but also on weapons and on the collars worn by chiefs. Now the signs of this writing bear the most astonishing similarity to the signs which occur on the Indus Valley seals, while some occur in Proto-Elamic of Susa, but not in the Indus seals.

The astonishing similarity can be understood without difficulty if the following words of H. P. Blavatsky are pondered over:—

The Secret Doctrine is the common property of the countless millions of men born under various climates, in times with which History refuses to deal, and to which esoteric teachings assign dates incompatible with the theories of Geology and Anthropology. The birth and evolution of the Sacred Science of the Past are lost in the very night of Time. . . . . .

The fragments of the systems that have now reached us are rejected as absurd fables. Nevertheless, occult Science—having survived even the great Flood that submerged the antediluvian giants and with them their very memory, save in the Secret Doctrine, the Bible and other Scriptures—still holds the Key to all the world problems. Let us apply that Key to the rare fragments of long-forgotten cosmogonies and try by their scattered parts to re-establish the once Universal Cosmogony of the Secret Doctrine. The Key fits them all. (*Secret Doctrine*. II. 794; I. 341).

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CONTENTS FOR OCTOBER 1932

SIMPLIFICATION
WORDSWORTH'S MYSTICISM—*By Hugh I'A. Fausset*
ARRAIGNMENT OF MODERN SCIENCE
i. THE DANGER OF SCIENTIFIC DOGMATISM—*By Henry Pratt Fairchild*
ii. CONFUSIONS OF MODERN SCIENCE—*By C. E. M. Joad*
iii. SCIENCE AND ETHICS—*By Pramathanath Mukhopadhyaya*
INDIA AND OBJECTIVE REALITY—*By A. R. Wadia*
THE SOUL ON THE STAGE—*By R. H. B.*
TRUTH AND SUPERSTITION—*By G. B. Harrison*
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Printed by M. N. Kulkarni at the Karnatak Printing Press, 318A Thakurdwar, Bombay, and published by K. N. Panday, Theosophy Company (India) Ltd., 51, Esplanade Road, Bombay.